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THE
POETICAL WORKS

OF

ALFRED TENNYSON,
POET LAUREATE.

COMPLETE EDITION.



BOSTON: JAMES R. OSGOOD & CO.

TORONTO:

ADAM, STEVENSON, & CO.

1873.

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The Lady
Mariana in
Eleánore .
The Miller
Fatima
CEnone .
The Sisters
To —
The Palace

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JAMES R. OSGOOD & CO., Publishers, Boston.

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POEMS.

(PUBLISHED 1830.)

TO THE QUEEN.

REVERED, beloved — O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain or birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria, — since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;

And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there ;

Then — while a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sunlit almond-blossom shakes —

Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;
For tho' the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,

And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day !
May children of our children say,
" She wrought her people lasting good ;

" Her court was pure ; her life serene ;
God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;

" And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons, when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet

" By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad based upon her people's will,
And compassed by the inviolate sea."

MARCH, 1831.

CLARIBEL.

A MELODY.

1.

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall :
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

2.

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone :
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the moss'd headstone :
At midnight the moon cometh,
And looketh down alone.

3.

Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The callow throstle lisbeth,
The slumberous wave outwelleth,
The babbling rannel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth.

LILIAN.

1.

AIRY, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me,
Claps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can ;
She 'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

2.

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs
She, looking thro' and thro' me
Thoroughly to undo me,
Smiling, never speaks :
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,

From beneath her gather'd wimple
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
Till the lightning laughters dimple
The baby-roses in her cheeks;
Then away she flies.

3.
Prythee weep, May Lillian !
Gayety without eclipse
Wearieth me, May Lillian :
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth
When from crimson-threaded lips
Silver-treble laughter trilleth.
Prythee weep, May Lil'an

4.
Praying all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lillian,
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
Fairy Lillian.

ISABEL.

1.
Eyes not down-dropped nor over-bright, but
fed
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by
Pure vestal thoughts in the, translucent
fane
Of her still spirit ; locks not wide spread,
Madonna-wise on either side her head ;
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood, and pure lowlihead.

2.
The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part
Error from crime ; a prudence to withhold ;
The laws of marriage character'd in gold
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart ;
A love still burning upward, giving light
To read those laws ; an accent very low
In blandishment, but a most silver flow
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,
Winning its way with extreme gentleness
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride ;
A courage to endure and to obey ;
A hate of gossip parlance and of sway,
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

3.
The mellowed reflex of a winter moon ;
A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,
Till in its onward current it absorbs
With swifter movement and in purer light
The vexed eddies of its wayward brother ;
A leaning and upbearing parasite,
Clothing the stem, which else had fallen
quite,
With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial
orbs

Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each
other —
Shadow forth thee ; — the world hath not
another
(Though all her fairest forms are types of thee,
And thou of God in thy great charity)
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

MARIANA.

" Mariana in the moated grange."
Measure for Measure.

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all :
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the peach to the garden-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :
Unlifted was the clinking latch :
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, " My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am awary, awary,
I would that I were dead !"

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the fitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, " The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am awary, awary,
I would that I were dead !"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :
The cock sung out an hour ere light ;
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her : without hope of change,
In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, " The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am awary, awary,
I would that I were dead !"

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark :
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, " My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am awary, awary,
I would that I were dead !"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.

But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peered about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
O God, that I were dead!"

TO ———.

1.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful scorn,
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain
The knots that tangle human creeds,
The wounding cords that bind and strain
The heart until it bleeds,
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
Roof not a glance so keen as thine:
If aught of prophecy be mine,
Thou wilt not live in vain.

2.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit;
Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow:
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.
Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant swords
Can do away that ancient lie;
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,
Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words.

3.

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
Until she be an athlete bold,

And weary with a finger's touch
Those writhed limbs of lightning speed;
Like that strange angel which of old,
Until the breaking of the light,
Wrestled with wandering Israel,
Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,
And heaven's mazed signs stood still
In the dim tract of Penuel.

MADELINE.

1.

Thou art not steeped in golden languors,
No tranced summer calm is thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
Delicious spites and darling angers,
And airy forms of fitting change.

2.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore.
Revealings deep and clear are thine
Of wealthy smiles; but who may know
Whether smile or frown be fleetest?
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
Who may know?
Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
Light-gloom over eyes divine,
Like little clouds, sun-fringed, are thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Thy smile and frown are not aloof
From one another,
Each to each is dearest brother;
Hues of the silken sheeny woof
Momentarily shot into each other.
All the mystery is thine;
Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore,
Ever varying Madeline.

3.

A subtle, sudden flame,
By veering passion fann'd,
About thee breaks and dances;
When I would kiss thy hand,
The flush of anger'd shame
O'erflows thy calmer glances,
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown.
But when I turn away,
Thou, willing me to stay,
Woorest not, nor vainly wranglest;
But, looking fixedly the while,
All my bounding heart entanglest
In a golden-netted smile;
Then in madness and in bliss,
If my lips should dare to kiss
Thy taper fingers amorously,
Again thou blushest angrily;
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown.

SONG. — THE OWL.

1.
WHEN cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirling sail goes round,
And the whirling sail goes round;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

2.
When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay:
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.

1.
THY tuwhits are lull'd I wot,
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
Which upon the dark afloat,
So took echo with delight,
So took echo with delight,
That her voice untuneful grown,
Wears all day a fainter tone.

2.
I would mock thy chaunt anew;
But I cannot mimic it;
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
With a lengthen'd loud halloo,
Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE
ARABIAN NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flow'd back with me,
The forward-flowing tide of time:
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
The low and bloomed foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue:
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
And broider'd sofas on each side:
In sooth it was a goodly time,

For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept
Adown to where the water slept.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,
Until another night in night
I enter'd, from the clearer light,
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
Imprisoning sweets, which as they clomb
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome
Of hollow boughs. — A goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal
Is rounded to as clear a lake.
From the green rivage many a fall
Of diamond rillels musical,
Thro' little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow
Fall'n silver-chiming, seem'd to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn
A walk with vary-color'd shells
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn
In order, eastern flowers large,
Some dropping low their crimson bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
With disks and tiars, fed the time
With odor in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon-grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulb as he sung;
Not he: but something which possess'd
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,
Apart from place, withholding time,
But flattering the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
Slumber'd: the solemn palms were ranged
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind:
A sudden splendor from behind
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,
And, flowing rapidly between

ODE TO MEMORY.

5

Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid.
Grew darker from that under-flame :
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,
Entranced with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn —
A realm of pleasure, many a mound,
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round
The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.
Right to the carved cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-based flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvellous time,
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone ;
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underpropt a rich

Throne of the massive ore, from which
Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,
Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd
With merriment of kingly pride,
Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him — in his golden prime,
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID !

ODE TO MEMORY.

I.

THOU who stealest fire,
From the fountains of the past,
To glorify the present ; oh, haste,
Visit my low desire !
Strengthen me, enlighten me !
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

2.

Come not as thou camest of late,
Flinging the gloom of yesternight
On the white day ; but robed in soften'd light
Of orient state.
Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
Even as a maid, whose stately brow
The dew-pearled winds of dawn have kiss'd,
When she, as thou,
Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,
Which in wintertide shall star
The black earth with brilliance rare.

3.

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
And with the evening cloud,
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my open
breast,
(Those peerless flowers which in the rudest
wind
Never grow sere,
When rooted in the garden of the mind,
Because they are the earliest of the year).
Nor was the night thy shroud.
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest
Thou leddest by the hand thine infant Hope.
The eddying of her garments caught from thee
The light of thy great presence ; and the cope
Of the half-attain'd futurity,
Though deep not fathomless,
Was cloven with the million stars which
tremble
O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.
Small thought was there of life's distress ;
For sure she deem'd no mist of earth could
dull
Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beauti-
ful :
Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,
Listening the lordly music flowing from
the illimitable y. y. s.
O stre... an me, enlighten me !

I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

4.

Come forth I charge thee, arise,
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes!
Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines

Unto mine inner eye,
Divinest Memory!

Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall
Which ever sounds and shines

A pillar of white light upon the wall
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:

Come from the woods that belt the gray hill-
side,

The seven elms, the poplars four
That stand beside my father's door,
And chiefly from the brook that loves
To purr o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,

In every elbow and turn,
The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland.

O! hither lead thy feet!
Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,
When the first matin-song hath waken'd loud
Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
What time the amber morn
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

5.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye
To the young spirit present

When first she is wed;

And like a bride of old

In triumph led,

With music and sweet showers
Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway.

Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,
In setting round thy first experiment

With royal frame-work of wrought gold;
Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,

And foremost in thy various gallery
Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls

Upon the storied walls;

For the discovery

And newness of thine art so pleased thee,
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest

Or boldest since, but lightly weighs
With thee unto the love thou bearest

The first-born of thy genius, Artist-like,
Ever retiring thou dost gaze

On the prime labor of thine early days:
No matter what the sketch might be;

Whether the high field on the bushless Pike,
Or even a sand-built ridge

Of heaped hills that mound the sea,
Overblown with murmurs harsh,

Or even a lowly cottage whence we see
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous

marsh,

Where from the frequent bridge,
Like emblems of infinity,

The trenched waters run from sky to sky;

Or a garden bower'd close
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,
Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,
Or opening upon level plots
Of crowned lilies, standing near
Purple-spiked lavender;

Whither in after life retired

From brawling storms,

From weary wind,

With youthful fancy reinspired,
We may hold converse with all forms

Of the many-sided mind,

And those whom passion hath not blinded,
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone,
Were how much better than to own

A crown, a sceptre, and a throne!

O strengthen me, enlighten me!

I faint in this obscurity,

Thou dewy dawn of memory.

SONG.

1.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:

To himself he talks;

For at eventide, listening earnestly,

At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
In the walks;

Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the mouldering flowers:

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower

Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,

Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

2.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose

An hour before death;

My very heart faints and my whole soul
grieves

At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
And the breath

Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose.

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower

Over its grave i' the earth so chilly,

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,

Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

ADELINE.

1.

MYSTERY of mysteries,
Faintly smiling Adeline,

Scarce of earth nor all divine,

Nor unhappy, nor at rest,

But beyond expression fair

With thy floating flaxen hair;

Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes

Take the heart from out my breast.

Wherefore those dim looks of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

2.

Whence that aery bloom of thine,
Like a lily which the sun
Looks thro' in his sad decline,
And a rose-bush leans upon,
Thou that faintly smilest still,
As a Naiad in a well,
Looking at the set of day,
Or a phantom two hours old
Of a maiden past away,
Ere the placid lips be cold?
Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,
Spiritual Adeline?

3.

What hope or fear or joy is thine?
Who talketh with thee, Adeline?
For sure thou art not all alone:
Do beating hearts of salient springs
Keep measure with thine own?
Hast thou heard the butterflies
What they say betwixt their wings?
Or in stillest evenings
With what voice the violet woos
To his heart the silver dew?
Or when little airs arise,
How the merry bluebell rings
To the mosses underneath?
Hast thou look'd upon the breath
Of the lilies at sunrise?
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

4.

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,
Some spirit of a crimson rose
In love with thee forgets to close
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs
All night long on darkness blind.
What aileth thee? whom waitest thou
With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,
Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

5.

Lovest thou the doleful wind
When thou gazest at the skies?
Doth the low-tongued Orient
Wander from the side of the morn,
Dripping with Sabæan spice
On thy pillow, lowly bent
With melodious airs lovemorn,
Breathing Light against thy face,
While his locks a-dropping twined
Round thy neck in subtle ring
Make a carcanet of rays
And ye talk togeth' still,
In the language whereat Spring
Letters cowslips on the hill?
Hence that look and smile of thine,
Spiritual Adeline.

A CHARACTER.

With a half-glance upon the sky
At night he said, "The wanderings
Of this most intricate Universe
Teach me the nothingness of things,"
Yet could not all creation pierce
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty: that the dull
Saw no divinity in grass,
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air;
Then looking as 't were in a glass,
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue: not the gods
More purely, when they wish to charm
Pallas and Juno sitting by:
And with a sweeping of the arm,
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
He canvass'd human mysteries,
And trod on silk, as if the winds
Blew his own praises in his eyes,
And stood aloof from other minds
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
Himself unto himself he sold:
Upon himself himself did feed:
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
And other than his form of creed,
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

THE POET.

The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of
scorn,
The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill
He saw thro' his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay: with echoing feet he threaded
The secretest walks of fame:
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were
headed
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver
tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
The fruitful wit

THE POET'S MIND. — THE SEA-FAIRIES.

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew,
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breath-
ing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with
beams,
Tho' one did fling the fire.
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the
world
Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark up-
curl'd,
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning
eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunn'd by those orient skies :
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power, — a sacred name.
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No
sword
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
She shook the world.

THE POET'S MIND.

1.

VEX not thou the poet's mind
With thy shadowy wit
VEX not thou the poet's mind :
For thou canst not illumine it.
Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river ;
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

2.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear ;
All the place is holy ground ;

Hollow smile and frozen sneer

Come not here.

Holy water will I pour

Upon every spicy flower

Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.

The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.

In your eye there is death,

There is frost in your breath

Which would blight the plants.

Where you stand you cannot hear

From the groves within

The wild-bird's din.

In the heart of the garden the merry bird

chants,

It would fall to the ground if you came in.

In the middle leaps a fountain

Like sheet lightning,

Ever brightening

With a low melodious thunder :

All day and all night it is ever drawn

From the brain of the purple mountain

Which stands in the distance yonder :

It springs on a level of bowery lawn,

And the mountain draws it from Her ven-

above,

And it sings a song of undying love ;

And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and full,

You never would hear it ; your ears are so

dull ;

So keep where you are : you are foul with sin ;

It would shrink to the earth if you came in.

THE SEA-FAIRIES.

Slow sail'd the weary mariners and saw,
Betwixt the green brink and the running
foam,

Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms
prest

To little harps of gold ; and while they
mused,

Whispering to each other half in fear,
Shrill music reach'd them on the middle
sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away ?
fly no more.

Whither away from the high green fields
the happy blossoming shore ?

Day and night to the billow the fountain
calls ;

Down shower the gambolling waterfalls

From wandering over the lea :

Out of the live-green heart of the dells

They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,

And thick with white bells the clover-hill
swells

High over the full-toned sea :

O hither, come hither and furl your sails,

Come hither to me and to me :

Hither, come hither and frolic and play ;

Here it is only the mew that wails ;

We will sing to you all the day :

Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,

For here are the blissful downs and dales,

And merrily merrily carol the gales,

And the spangle dances in bright and bay,

And the rainbow forms and flies on the land
Over the islands free;
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the
sand;

Hither, come hither and see;
And the rainbow hangs on the poisoning wave,
And sweet is the color of cove and cave,
And sweet shall your welcome be:
O hither, come hither, and be our lords
For merry brides are we:
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet
words:

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
With pleasure and love and jubilee:
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
When the sharp clear twang of the golden
chords

Runs up the ridged sea.
Who can light on as happy a shore
All the world o'er, all the world o'er?
Whither away? listen and stay: mariner,
mariner, fly no more.

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

1.

Life and Thought have gone away
Sid' by side,
Leaving door and windows wide:
Careless tenants they!

2.

All within is dark as night:
In the windows is no light;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

3.

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or thro' the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

4.

Come away: no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

5.

Come away: for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us!

THE DYING SWAN.

1.

The plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.

With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went.

2.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snows.
One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh:
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far thro' the marsh green and still
The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow

3.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and clear;
And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole:
Sometimes afar, and sometimes nearer
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold;
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps
of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening
star.
And the creeping mosses and clambering
weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the sighing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marsh-flowers that throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE.

1.

Now is done thy long day's work;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.
Let them rave.
Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

2.

Thou nor carketh care nor slander;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.
Let them rave.
Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

3.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;
 Chanteth not the brooding bee
 Sweeter tones than calumny ?
 Let them rave.
 Thou wilt never raise thine head
 From the green that folds thy grave
 Let them rave.

4.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;
 The woodbine and eglare
 Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.
 Let them rave.
 Rain makes music in the tree
 O'er the green that folds thy grave
 Let them rave.

5.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,
 Bramble-roses, faint and pale,
 And long purples of the dale.
 Let them rave.
 These in every shower creep
 Thro' the green that folds thy grave.
 Let them rave.

6.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine ;
 The frail bluebell peereth over
 Rare broidry of the purple clover.
 Let them rave.
 Kings have no such couch as thine,
 As the green that folds thy grave.
 Let them rave.

7.

Wild words wander here and there ;
 God's great gift of speech abused
 Makes thy memory confused :
 But let them rave.
 The balm-cricket carols clear
 In the green that folds thy grave.
 Let them rave.

LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was gathering
 light

Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,
 And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes ;
 When, turning round a cassia, full in view
 Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,
 And talking to himself, first met his sight :
 " You must begone," said Death, " these
 walks are mine."
 Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for
 flight ;

Yet ere he parted said, " This hour is thine :
 Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree
 Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,
 So in the light of great eternity
 Life eminent creates the shade of death ;
 The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,
 But I shall reign forever over all."

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,
 Oriana.
 There is no rest for me below,
 Oriana.
 When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with
 snow,
 And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,
 Oriana,
 Alone I wander to and fro,
 Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,
 Oriana,
 At midnight the cock was crowing,
 Oriana :
 Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
 We heard the steeds to battle going,
 Oriana ;
 Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,
 Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,
 Oriana,
 Ere I rode into the fight,
 Oriana,
 While blissful tears blinded my sight
 By star-shine and by moonlight,
 Oriana,
 I to thee my troth did plight,
 Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,
 Oriana :
 She watch'd my crest among them all,
 Oriana :
 She saw me fight, she heard me call,
 When forth there stept a foeman tall,
 Oriana,
 Atween me and the castle wall,
 Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,
 Oriana :
 The false, false arrow went aside,
 Oriana :
 The damned arrow glanced aside,
 And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,
 Oriana !
 Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
 Oriana !

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,
 Oriana.
 Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,
 Oriana.
 Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,
 The battle deepen'd in its place,
 Oriana ;
 But I was down upon my face,
 Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,
 Oriana !
 How could I rise and come away,
 Oriana ?
 How could I look upon the day ?

CIRCUMSTANCE.—THE MERMAN.—THE MERMAID.

11

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,

Oriana —

They should have trod me into clay,
Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,
Oriana!

O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
Oriana!

Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,
And then the tears run down my cheek,

Oriana :

What watest thou? whom dost thou seek,
Oriana?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,
Oriana.

Thou comest between me and the skies,
Oriana.

I feel the tears of blood arise
Up from my heart unto my eyes,
Oriana.

Within thy heart my arrow lies,
Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !
Oriana !

O happy thou that liest low,
Oriana !

All night the silence seems to flow
Beside me in my utter woe,
Oriana.

A weary, weary way I go,
Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,
Oriana,

I walk, I dare not think of thee,
Oriana.

Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,
I dare not die and come to thee,
Oriana.

I hear the roaring of the sea,
Oriana.

CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbor villages
Playing mad pranks along the healthy leas;
Two strangers meeting at a festival;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall;
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease;
Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-
tower,
Wash'd with still rains and daisy-blossomed;
Two children in one hamlet born and bred;
So runs the round of life from hour to hour.

THE MERMAN.

1.

Who would be
A merman bold,
Sitting alone,
Singing alone
Under the sea,
With a crown of gold,
On a throne?

2.

I would be a merman bold;
I would sit and sing the whole of the day;
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of
power;

But at night I would roam abroad and play
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,
Dressing their hair with the white sea-
flower;

And holding them back by their flowing
locks

I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
Laughingly, laughingly;

And then we would wander away, away
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and
high,

Chasing each other merrily.

3.

There would be neither moon nor star;
But the wave would make music above us
afar —

Low thunder and light in the magic night —
Neither moon nor star.

We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,
Call to each other and whoop and cry

All night, merrily, merrily;
They would pelt me with starry spangles
and shells,

Laughing and clapping their hands be-
tween,

All night, merrily, merrily:
But I would throw to them back in mine
Turkis and agate and almondine:
Then leaping out upon them unseen
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me

Laughingly, laughingly.
Oh ! what a happy life were mine
Under the hollow-hung ocean green !
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea;
We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID.

1.

Who would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne?

2.

I would be a mermaid fair;
I would sing to myself the whole of the
day;

With a comb of pearl I would comb my
hair;

And still as I comb'd I would sing and
say,

"Who is it loves me? who loves not me?"
I would comb my hair till my ringlets
would fall,

Low adown, low adown,

From under my starry sea-bud crown
 Low down, and around,
 And I should look like a fountain of gold
 Springing alone
 With a shrill inner sound,
 Over the throne
 In the midst of the hall:
 Till that great sea-snake under the sea
 From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps
 Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
 Round the hall where I sate, and look in at
 the gate
 With his large calm eyes for the love of me.
 And all the mermen under the sea
 Would feel their immortality
 Die in their hearts for the love of me.

3.

But at night I would wander away, away,
 I would fling on each side my low-flowing
 locks,
 And lightly vault from the throne and play
 With the mermen in and out of the rocks;
 We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,
 On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson
 shells,
 Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.
 But if any came near I would call, and shriek,
 And adown the steep like a wave I would
 leap
 From the diamond-ledges that jut from the
 dells;
 For I would not be kiss'd by all who would
 list,
 Of the bold merry mermen under the sea;
 They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter
 me,

In the purple twilights under the sea;
 But the king of them all would carry me,
 Woo me, and win me, and marry me,
 In the branching jaspers under the sea;
 Then all the dry pied things that be
 In the hueless mosses under the sea
 Would curl round my silver feet silently.
 All looking up for the love of me.
 And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
 All things that are forked, and horned, and
 soft
 Would lean out from the hollow sphere of
 the sea,
 All looking down for the love of me.

SONNET TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee — thou wilt
 be
 A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
 To scare church-harpies from the master's
 feast;
 Our dusted velvets have much need of thee;
 Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws,
 Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily;
 But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy
 To embattail and to wall about thy cause
 With iron-worded proof, hating to hark
 The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone
 Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-
 out clerk
 Brown-beats his desk below. Thou from a
 throne
 Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark
 Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark,

P O E M S .

(PUBLISHED 1832.)

[This division of this volume was published in the winter of 1832. Some of the poems have been considerably altered. Others have been added, which, with one exception, were written in 1833.]

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

On either side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye,
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
 And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot;
 And up and down the people go,
 Gazing where the lilies blow
 Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
 Little breezes dusk and shiver

Thro' the wave that runs forever
 By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
 Overlook a space of flowers,
 And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
 Slide the heavy barges trail'd
 By slow horses; and unhail'd
 The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot:
 But who hath seen her wave her hand?
 Or at the casement seen her stand?

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THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

13

Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot :
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers, " 'T is the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay

To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot :
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two :
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights,
And music, went to Camelot :
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed ;
" I am half-sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen grooves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight forever kneeling
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see

Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot :
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather.
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
" Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide ;
The mirror crack'd from side to side ;
" The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

IN the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot ;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loos'd the chain, and down she lay ;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot :
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot;
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
A corse between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer:
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face:
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

With one black shadow at its feet,
The house thro' all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines:
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.
But "Ave Mary," made she moan,
And "Ave Mary," night and morn,
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest brown
To left and right, and made appear,
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.
And "Ave Mary," was her moan,
"Madonna, sad is night and morn";
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

Till all the crimson changed, and past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmur'd she;
Complaining, "Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load."
And on the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.
"Is this the form," she made her moan,
"That won his praises night and
morn?"

And "Ah," she said, "but I wake alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming salt;
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seem'd to knee-deep in mountain grass,
And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,
And murmuring, as at night and morn,
She thought, "My spirit is here alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:
She felt he was and was not there.
She woke: the babble of the stream
Fell, and without the steady glare
Shrank one sick willow sere and small.
The river-bed was dusty-white;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.
She whisper'd, with a stifled moan
More inward than at night or morn,
"Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
Live forgotten and die forlorn."

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For "Love," they said, "must needs be true,
To what is loveliest upon earth."
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say,
"But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone forevermore."
"O cruel heart," she changed her tone,
"And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn!"

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
"But thou shalt be alone no more."
And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.
"The day to night," she made her moan,
"The day to night, the night to morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And lean'd upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
And deepening through the silent spheres,
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan,
"The night comes on that knows not
morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

ELEÄNORE.

I.

THY dark eyes open'd not,
Nor first reveal'd themselves to English air,
For there is nothing here,
Which, from the outward to the inward
brought,
Moulded thy baby thought.
Far off from human neighborhood,
Thou wert born, on a summer morn,
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.
Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd
With breezes from our oaken glades,
But thou wert nursed in some delicious land
Of lavish lights, and floating shades:
And flattering thy childish thought
The oriental fairy brought,
At the moment of thy birth,
From old well-heads of haunted rills,
And the hearts of purple hills,
And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,
The choicest wealth of all the earth,
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

II.

Or the yellow-banded bees,
Thro' half-open lattices
Coming in the scented breeze,
Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
With whitest honey in fairy gardens
cull'd—
A glorious child, dreaming alone,
In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,
With the hum of swarming bees
Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

III.

Who may minister to thee?
Summer herself should minister
To thee with fruitage golden-rinded
On golden salvers, or it may be,
Youngest Autumn, in a tower
Grape-thicken'd from the light, and blinded
With many a deep-hued bell-like flower
Of fragrant trailers, when the air
Sleepeth over all the heaven.
And the crag that fronts the Even,
All along the shadowing shore,
Crimsons over an inland mere,
Eleänore!

IV.

How may full-sail'd verse express,
How may measured words adore
The full-flowing harmony
Of thy swan-like stateliness,
Eleänore?
The luxuriant symmetry
Of thy floating gracefulness,
Eleänore?
Every turn and glance of thine,
Every lineament divine,
Eleänore,
And the steady sunset glow,
That stays upon thee? For in thee

Is nothing sudden, nothing single:
Like two streams of incense free
From one censer, in one shrine,
Thought and motion mingle,
Mingle ever. Motions flow
To one another, even as tho'
They were modulated so
To an unheard melody,
Which lives about thee, and a sweep
Of richest pauses, evermore
Drawn from each other mellow-deep;
Who may express thee, Eleänore?

V.

I stand before thee, Eleänore:
I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
Daily and hourly, more and more.
I muse, as in a trance, the while
Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.
I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
The languors of thy love-deep eyes
Float on to me. I would I were
So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
To stand apart, and to adore,
Gazing on thee forevermore,
Serene, imperial Eleänore!

VI.

Sometimes, with most intensity
Gazing, I seem to see
Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep,
Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep
In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,
I cannot veil, or droop my sight,
But am as nothing in its light:
As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,
Ev'n while we gaze on it,
Should slowly round his orb, and slowly
grow
To a full face, there like a sun remain
Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,
And draw itself to what it was before:
So full, so deep, so slow,
Thought seems to come and go
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

VII.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
Roof'd the world with doubt and fear,
Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,
Grow golden all about the sky;
In thee all passion becomes passionless,
Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowiness,
Losing his fire and active might
In a silent meditation,
Falling into a still delight,
And luxury of contemplation:
As waves that up a quiet cove
Rolling slide, and lying still
Shadow forth the banks at will:
Or sometimes they swell and move,
Pressing up against the land,
With motions of the outer sea:
And the self-name influence
Controlleth all the soul and sense
Of Passion gazing upon thee.

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,
Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
Proops both his wings, regarding thee,
And so would languish evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleânore.

8.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses un-
confined,
While the amorous, odorous wind
Breathes low between the sunset and the
moon;

Or, in a shadowy saloon,
Silken cushions halt reclined;
I watch thy grace; and in its place
My heart a charmed slumber keeps,
While I muse upon thy face;
And a languid fire creeps
Thro' my veins to all my frame,
Dissolvingly and slowly: soon
From thy rose-red lips my name
Floweth; and then, as in a swoon,
With dinning sound my ears are rife,
My tremulous tongue faltereth,
I lose my color, I lose my breath,
I drink the cup of a costly death,
Drim'd with delirious draughts of warmest
life.

I die with my delight, before
I hear what I would hear from thee;
Yet tell my name again to me,
I would be dying evermore,
So dying ever, Eleânore.

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I see the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead dryly curl'd,
Seem'd half-within and half-without,
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver cup—
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass: give me one kiss:
My own sweet Alice, we must die,
There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unrid'd by and by.
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?
I least should breathe a thought of pain.
Would God renew me from my birth
I'd almost live my life again

So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
And once again to woo thee mine—
It seems in after-dinner talk
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy,
Late-left an orphan of the squire,
Where this old mansion mounted high
Looks down upon the village spire:
For even here, where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so long,
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove
In firry woodlands making moan;
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
I had no motion of my own.
For scarce my life with fancy play'd
Before I dream'd that pleasant dream—
Still hither thither idly sway'd
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
The milldam rushing down with noise,
And see the minnows everywhere
In crystal eddies glance and poise,
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
Below the range of stepping-stones,
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
When after roving in the woods
(T was April then), I came and sat
Below the chestnuts, when their buds
Were glistening to the breezy blue;
And on the slope, an absent fool,
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain,
Beat time to nothing in my head
From some odd corner of the brain.
It haunted me, the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes,
The phantom of a silent song,
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
I watch'd the little circles die;
They past into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye;
The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,
That morning, on the casement's edge
A long green box of mignonette,
And you were leaning from the ledge:
And when I raised my eyes, above
They met with two so full and bright—
Such eyes I swear to you, my love,
That these have never lost their light.

with thee to walk,
woo thee mine—
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s and the wine—

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the village spire;
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and bright—
my love,
their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear
That I should die an early death;
For love possess'd the atmosphere,
And fill'd the breast with purer breath.
My mother thought, What ails the boy?
For I was alter'd, and began
To move about the house with joy,
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
When April nights began to blow,
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,
I saw the village lights below;
I knew your taper far away,
And full at heart of trembling hope,
From off the wold I came, and lay
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill:
And "by that lamp," I thought, "she
sits!"

The white chalk-quarry from the hill
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.
"O that I were beside her now!
O will she answer if I call?
O would she give me vow for vow,
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?"

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;
And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within;
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.
At last you rose and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white with May,
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek
Flush'd like the coming of the day;
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,
You would, and would not, little one!
Although I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire:
She wish'd me happy, but she thought
I might have look'd a little higher;
And I was young—too young to wed:
"Yet must I love her for your sake;
Go fetch your Alice here," she said:
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:
But, Alice, you were ill at ease;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
Too fearful that you should not please.

I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but well;
And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would not see;
She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of me;
And turning look'd upon your face,
As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, press'd you heart to heart

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song
I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,
As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles at her ear:
For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty, dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest:
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells—
True love interprets—right alone.
His light upon the letter dwells,
For all the spirit is his own.
So, if I waste words now, in truth,
You must blame Love. His early rage
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,
Like mine own life to me thou art,
Where Past and Present, wou'd in one,
Do make a garland for the heart:
So sing that other song I made,
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,
The day, when in the chestnut shade
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,
Can he pass, and we forget?
Many suns arise and set.
Many a chance the years beget.
Love the gift is Love the debt.
Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.
Love is made a vague regret.
Eyes with idle tears are wet.
Idle habit links us yet.
What is love? for we forget :
Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms entwine ;
My other dearer life in life,
Look thro' my very soul with thine !
Untouch'd with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes forever dwell !
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed : they had their part
Of sorrow : for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness past again,
And left a want unknown before ;
Although the loss that brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee :
But that God bless thee, dear — who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind —
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,
To yon old mill across the wolds ;
For look, the sunset, south and north,
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casement glass,
And fires the sullen pool below :
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA.

O Love, Love, Love ! O withering might !
O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,
Lo, falling from my constant mind,
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers :
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers :
I roll'd among the tender flowers :
I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth :
I look'd athwart the burning drouth
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,
From my swift blood that went and came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.
O Love, O fire ! once he drew

With one long kiss my whole soul thro'
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
He cometh quickly : from below
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow
Before him, striking on my brow.
In my dry brain my spirit soon,
Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the noon a fire
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire ;
And, isled in sudden seas of light,
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce delight,
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eye :
I will possess him or will die.
I will grow round him in his place,
Grow, live, die looking on his face,
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

CENONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to
pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-edges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them
roars

The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning : but in
front

The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful Cenone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her
neck

Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper
cliff.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill :
The grasshopper is silent in the grass :
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the cicada sleeps.
The purple flowers droop : the golden bee
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,

my whole soul thro'
drinketh dew.

hill, I know
on below
deep gardens, blow
my brow.
spirit soon,
m swoon to swoon,
morning moon.

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ountain'd Ida,
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holds the hill:
n the grass:
on the stone,
e cicala sleeps.
the golden bee
ake.
y heart of love,

My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Hear me O Earth, hear me O Hills, O Caves
That house the cold crown'd snake! O moun-
tain brooks,

I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gather'd shape: for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine:
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-
hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft:
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-
dropt eyes
I sat alone: white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny
hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's;
And his cheek, brighten'd as the foam-bow
brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my
heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he
came.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white
palm

Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.

"My own Cenone,
Beautiful-brow'd Cenone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind en-
grav'n

"For the most fair," would seem to award it
thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married
brows.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added, 'This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 't were
due;

But light-foot Iris brought it yester-even,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Here comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
This need of fairest. Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
It was the deep midnooh: one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piny sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they
came,
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded
bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
And overheard the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and
thro'.

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and
lean'd
Lpon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom
Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many a
vale
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with
corn,
Or labor'd mines undrainable of ore.
Honor,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of
power,
'Which in all action is the end of all;
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom -- from all neighbor
crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from
me,
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee
king-born,
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in
power
Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit

Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of
 power
 Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she
 stood
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
 The while, above, her full and earnest eye
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-
 control,
 These three alone lead life to sovereign
 power.

Yet not for power, (power of herself
 Would come uncalled for) but to live by law,
 Acting the law we live by without fear;
 And, because right is right, to follow right
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Again she said: 'I woo thee not with gifts.
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
 So shalt thou find me fairest."

Yet, indeed,

If gazing on divinity disrobed
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
 Unbiass'd by self-profit, oh! rest thee sure
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to
 thee,

So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
 To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
 Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
 Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
 Commensure perfect freedom."

"Here she ceased,
 And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, 'O Paris,
 Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me not,
 Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!"

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
 Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian
 wells,

With rosy slender fingers backward drew
 From her warm brows and bosom her deep
 hair
 Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
 And shoulder: from the violets her light foot
 Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
 Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
 Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
 The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
 Half-whisper'd in his ear, 'I promise thee
 The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.'
 She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my sight for
 fear:

But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,

And I beheld great Her's angry eyes,
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
 And I was left alone within the bower;
 And from that time to this I am alone,
 And I shall be alone until I die.

"Yet, mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Fairest — why fairest wife? am I not fair?
 My love hath told me so a thousand times.
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
 When I passed by, a wild and wanton pard,
 Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
 Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving
 is she?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
 Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
 Close, close to thine in that quick-falling rain
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
 My dark tall oines, that plumed the craggy
 ledge

High over the blue gorge, and all between
 The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
 Foster'd the callow eagle — from beneath
 Whose thick mysterious bows in the dark
 morn

The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
 Low in the valley. Never, never more
 Shall lone Cenone see the morning mist
 Sweep thro' them; never see them overlaid
 With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
 Between the loud stream and the trembling
 stars.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
 Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,
 The Abominable, that uninvited came
 Into the fair Peleian banquet-hall,
 And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
 And bred this change; that I might speak
 my mind,

And tell her to her face how much I hate
 Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
 In this green valley, under this green hill,
 Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
 Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?
 O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
 O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my
 face?

O happy earth, how canst thou bear my
 weight?
 O death, death, death, thou ever-floating
 cloud,

There are enough unhappy on this earth,
 Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:
 I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
 And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
 Thou weightiest heavy on the heart within,
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

's angry eyes,
golden cloud,
in the bower;
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heart within,
let me die.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and
more,

Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost
hills,

Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born : her child ! — a shudder comes
Across me : never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes !

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of Death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire.

THE SISTERS.

W^e were two daughters of one race :

She was the fairest in the face :

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.

They were together, and she fell ;

Therefore revenge became me well.

O the Earl was fair to see !

She died : she went to burning flame :
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.

The wind is howling in turret and tree.

Whole weeks and months, and early and late,

To win his love I lay in wait :

O the Earl was fair to see !

I made a feast ; I bade him come :

I won his love, I brought him home.

The wind is roaring in turret and tree.

And after supper, on a bed,

Upon my lap he laid his head :

O the Earl was fair to see !

I kiss'd his eyelids unto rest :

His ruddy cheek upon my breast.

The wind is raging in turret and tree.

I hated him with the hate of hell,

But I loved his beauty passing well.

O the Earl was fair to see !

I rose up in the silent night :

I made my dagger sharp and bright.

The wind is raving in turret and tree.

As half-asleep his breath he drew,

Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.

O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,
He look'd so grand when he was dead.

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
I wrapt his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's feet.
O the Earl was fair to see !

TO —.

WITH THE FOLLOWING FORM.

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,
(For you will understand it) of a soul,
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mould and mind),
And Knowledge for its beauty : or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge are three
sisters

That doat upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sunder'd without tears,
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the common
earth,
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the
tears

Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd
brass,

I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and
round," I said,
"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast
shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily :
"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me,
So royal-rich and wide."

* * * * *
* * * * *

Four courts I made, East, West and South
and North,
In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a
row
Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge to distant lands,
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the
sky
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one
swell
Across the mountain stream'd below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd
To hang on tip-oe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odor steam'd
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, "And who shall gaze
upon
My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the sun,
And that sweet incense rise?"

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd,
And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and
traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires
From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced,
And tipt with frost-like spires.

* * * * *

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Thro' which the live-long day my soul did
pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace
stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with awas green and
blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter
blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red,—a tract of
sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced forever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing
caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil,
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind.

And one, a foreground black with stones and
slags,
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful
crag,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home,—gray twilight
pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep,—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there,
Not less than truth design'd

* * * * *

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonix
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;
An angel looked at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise,
A group of Hours bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a footfall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king
to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,
From off her shoulder backward borne :
From one hand droop'd a crocus : one hand
grasp'd
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flushed Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone : but every legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,
Not less than life, design'd.

* * * * *

Then in the towers I placed great bells that
swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver sound ;
And with choice paintings of wise men I
hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild ;
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his
song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest ;
A million wrinkles carved his skin ;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and
stings ;

Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose an athlete, strong to break or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man de-
clin'd,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod : and those great bells
Began to chime. She took her throne :
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' color'd flame
Two godlike faces gazed below ;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair
In diverse raiment strange :

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald,
blue,
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon,
drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song
Throb thro' the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself : " All these are
mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'T is one to me." She—when young night
divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven ; and clapt her hands and
cried,
" I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,
Be flatter'd to the height.

" O all things fair to sate my various eyes !
O shapes and hues that please me well !
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell !

" O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of
swine
That range on yonder plain.

" In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep ;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deed."

Then of the moral instinct would she prate,
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate ;
And at the last she said :

" I take possession of man's mind and deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl.

I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all."

* * * * *

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she thrrove and prosper'd: so three
years

She prosper'd: on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd
her sight,
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote "Mene, mene," and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself: again, from out that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of strength,"
she said,
"My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were
laid
Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of
blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months old at noon she
came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand;
Left on the shore; that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the
land
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.
"No voice," she shriek'd in that lone hall,
"No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this
world:
One deep, deep silence all!"

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mould-
ering sod,
Inwraught tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, "I have
found
A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, "I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly finished,
She threw her royal robes away,
"Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,
"Where I may mourn and pray.

"Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built:
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt."

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown:
You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired:
The daughter of a hundred Earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your name,

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Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
 Too proud to care from whence I came.
 Nor would I break for your sweet sake
 A heart that doats on truer charms.
 A simple maiden in her flower
 Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 Some meeker pupil you must find,
 For were you queen of all that is,
 I could not stoop to such a mind.
 You sought to prove how I could love,
 And my disdain is my reply.
 The lion on your old stone gates
 Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 You put strange memories in my head.
 Not thrice your branching limes have
 blown
 Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
 Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies :
 A great enchantress you may be ;
 But there was that across his throat
 Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 When thus he met his mother's view,
 She had the passions of her kind,
 She spake some certain truths of you.
 Indeed I heard one bitter word
 That scarce is fit for you to hear ;
 Her manners had not that repose
 Which stamps the caste of Vere de
 Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 There stands a spectre in your hall :
 The guilt of blood is at your door :
 You changed a wholesome heart to gall.
 You held your course without remorse,
 To make him trust his modest worth,
 And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
 And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
 From yon blue heavens above us bent
 The grand old gardener and his wife
 Smile at the claims of long descent.
 Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
 'T is only noble to be good.
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,
 And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere :
 You pine among your halls and towers :
 The languid light of your proud eyes
 Is wearied of the rolling hours.
 In glowing health, with boundless wealth,
 But sickening of a vague disease,
 You know so ill to deal with time,
 You needs must play such pranks as these

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
 If Time be heavy on your hands,
 Are there no beggars at your gate,
 Nor any poor about your lands ?
 Oh ! teach the orphan-boy to read,
 Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
 Pray Heaven for a human heart,
 And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE MAY QUEEN.

You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear ;
 To-morrow 'll be the happiest time of all the glad New-year ;
 Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day ;
 For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

There 's many a black black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine ;
 There 's Margaret and Mary, there 's Kate and Caroline :
 But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,
 So I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,
 If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break :
 But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,
 For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,
 But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree ?
 He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday, —
 But I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,
 And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.
 They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,
 For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

They say he 's dying all for love, but that can never be :
 They say his heart is breaking, mother — what is that to me ?

NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

There 's many a bolder lad 'ill wpo me any summer day,
And I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,
And you 'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen ;
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,
And I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers ;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,
And I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass ;
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,
And I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,
For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year :
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,
For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

If you 're waking, call me early, call me early, mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set : he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind ;
And the New-year 's coming up, mother, but I shall never see
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers : we had a merry day ;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May ;
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There 's not a flower on all the hills ; the frost is on the pane :
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again :
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high :
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light
You 'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night ;
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You 'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,
And you 'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.

I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now;
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go;
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place;
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face;
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what you say,
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away.

Good-night, good-night, when I have said good-night forevermore,
And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door:
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green;
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor;
Let her take 'em: they are hers: I shall never garden more:
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rose-bush that I set
About the parlor-window and the box of mignonette.

Good-night, sweet mother: call me before the day is born,
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.

CONCLUSION.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am;
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year!
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,
And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done!
But still I think it can't be long before I find release;
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair!
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there!
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head!
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in:
Nor would I now be well, mother, again, if that could be,
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet;
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call;
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all;
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear;
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here;

THE LOTOS-EATERS.

With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,
And then did something speak to me — I know not what was said;
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, "It's not for them: it's mine."
And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret;
There's many worthier than I, would make him happy yet.
If I had lived — I cannot tell — I might have been his wife;
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow;
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine —
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done
The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun —
For ever and for ever with those just souls and true —
And what is life, that we should moan? why make we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home —
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come —
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast —
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

THE LOTOS-EATERS.

"COURAGE!" he said, and pointed toward
the land,

"This mounting wave will roll us shore-
ward soon."

In the afternoon they came unto a land,
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender
stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did
seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward
smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows
broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-
tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with show-
ery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven
copses.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the
dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding
vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale:
A land where all things always seem'd the
same!

And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters
came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they
gave

To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did
make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore

Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no
more";
And all at once they sang, "Our island
home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer
roam."

CHORIC SONG.

1.

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the
blissful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers
weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs
in sleep.

2.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?

All things have rest: why should we toil
alone,

We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm:
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"

Why should we only toil, the roof and crown
of things?

3.

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats down the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

4.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labor be?

Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the
grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or
dreamful ease.

5.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward
stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber
light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the
height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy:
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn
of brass!

6.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd
change;
For surely now our household hearths are
cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange;
And we should come like ghosts to trouble
joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel
sings
Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain:
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'T is hard to settle order once again.
There is confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-
stars.

7.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing
lowly)
With half-dropt eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,

To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill —
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined
vine —

To watch the emerald-color'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling
brine,

Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out be-
neath the pine.

8.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :
All day the wind breathes low with mellow
tone :

Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow
Lotos-dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion
we,

Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when
the surge was seething free,

Where the wallowing monster spouted his
foam-fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an
equal mind,

In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie re-
clined

On the hills like Gods together, careless of
mankind.

For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts
are hurl'd

Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds
are lightly curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the
gleaming world :

Where they smile in secret, looking over
wasted lands,

Blight and famine, plague and earthquake,
roaring deeps and fiery sands,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and
sinking ships, and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in
a doleful song

Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient
tale of wrong,

Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words
are strong ;

Chanted from an ill-used race of men that
cleave the soil,

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with
enduring toil,

Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine
and oil :

Till they perish and they suffer — some, 't is
whispered — down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian
valleys dwell,

Resting weary limbs at last on beds of as-
phodel.

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than
toil, the shore

Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and
wave and oar ;

O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wan-
der more.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,
" *The Legend of Good Women*," long
ago

Sung by the morning ear of song, who made
His music heard below ;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet
breath

Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
Held me above the subject, as strong
gales

Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my
heart,

Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every
land

I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning
stars,

And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and
wrong,

And trumpets blown for wars ;

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging
hoofs :

And I saw crowds in column'd sanctua-
ries ;

And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces ;

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall

Dislodging pinnacle and parapet

Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;

Lances in ambush set ;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated
blasts

That run before the fluttering tongues of
fire ;

White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and
masts,

And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen
plates,

Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers
woes,

Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to
land

Bluster the winds and tides the self-same
way,

Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

R WOMEN.

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"Women," long
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 the level sand,
 spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,
 Resolved on noble things, and strove to
 speak,
 As when a great thought strikes along the
 brain,
 And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down
 A cavalier from oft his saddle-bow,
 That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town ;
 And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies by down-lapsing
 thought
 Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and
 did creep
 Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd,
 and brought
 Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wandered far
 In an old wood : fresh-wash'd in coolest
 dew,

The maiden splendors of the morning star
 Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree boles did stoop and lean
 Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
 Their broad curved branches, fledged with
 clearest green,
 New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her journey
 done,
 And with dead lips smiled at the twilight
 plain.

Half fall'n across the threshold of the sun,
 Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
 Not any song of bird or sound of rill ;
 Great darkness of the inner sepulchre
 Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine
 turn'd
 Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,
 And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd
 The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew
 The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
 On those long, rank, dark wood-walks
 drench'd in dew,
 Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
 Pour'd back into my empty soul and
 frame
 The times when I remember to have been
 Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone
 Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful
 clime,

"Pass freely thro' : the wood is all thine own,
 Until the end of time."

At length I saw a lady within call,
 Still than chisell'd marble, standing
 there ;

A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
 And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
 Froze my swift speech ; she turning on
 my face

The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
 Spoke slowly in her place.

"I had great beauty ; ask thou not my name :
 No one can be more wise than destiny.
 Many drew swords and died. Where'er I
 came
 I brought calamity."

"No marvel, sovereign lady : in fair field
 Myself for such a face had boldly died."
 I answer'd free ; and turning I appeal'd
 To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
 To her full height her stately stature
 draws :

"My youth," she said, "was blasted with a
 curse :
 This woman was the cause.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad place,
 Which yet to name my spirit loathes and
 fears :

My father held his hand upon his face :
 I, blinded with my tears,

"Still strove to speak : my voice was thick
 with sighs

As in a dream. Dimly I could descry
 The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish
 eyes,
 Waiting to see me die.

"The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat ;
 The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and
 the shore ;

The bright death quiver'd at the victim's
 throat ;
 Touch'd ; and I knew no more."

Whereto the other with a downward brow :
 "I would the white cold heavy-plunging
 foam,

Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,
 Then when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence
 drear,

As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea ;
 Sudden I heard a voice that cried, "Come
 here,
 That I may look on thee."

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,
 One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd ;
 A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black
 eyes,

Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began :

"I govern'd men by change, and so I sway'd

All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.

Once, like the moon, I made

"The ever-shifting currents of the blood According to my humor ebb and flow.

I have no men to govern in this wood :

That makes my only woe.

"Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend

One will ; nor tame and tutor with mine eye

That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee, friend,

Where is Mark Antony?

"The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime

On Fortune's neck : we sat as God by God :

The Nilus would have risen before his time And flooded at our nod.

"We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit Lamps which outburn'd Canopus. O my life

In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the wit, The flattery and the strife,

"And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,

My Hercules, my Roman Antony,

My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms, Contented there to die !

"And there he died : and when I heard my name

Sigh'd forth with life I would not brook my fear.

Of the other : with a worm I balk'd his fame.

What else was left ? look here ! "

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half The polish'd argent of her breast to sight

Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,

Showing the asp's bite.)

"I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,

A name forever ! — lying robed and crown'd, Worthy a Roman spouse."

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance

From tone to tone, and glided thro' all change

Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight ;

Because with sudden motion from the ground

She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd with light

The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts ;

As once they drew into two burning rings

All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn,

And singing clearer than the crested bird, That claps his wings at dawn.

"The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,

Jound all night long, in falling thro' the dell,

Far-heard beneath the moon.

"The balmy moon of blessed Israel Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine :

All night the splinter'd crags that wall the dell

With spires of silver shine."

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves

The lawn of some cathedral, thro' the door

Hearing the holy organ rolling waves Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and tied To where he stands, — so stood I, when

that flow

Of music left the lips of her that died To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite, A maiden pure ; as when she went along

From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light,

With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth : "Heaven heads the count of crimes

With that wild oath." She render'd answer high :

"Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand times I would be born and die.

"Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root

Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,

Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower to fruit Changed, I was ripe for death.

"My God, my land, my father, — these did move

Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,

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Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

"And I went mourning, 'No fair Hebrew
boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame
among
The Hebrew mothers' — emptied of all joy,
Leaving the dance and song,

"Leaving the olive gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow
Beneath the battled tower.

"The light white cloud swam over us. Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his den;
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
Or, from the darken'd glen,

"Saw God divide the night with flying
flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became
A solemn scorn of ills.

"When the next moon was roll'd into the
sky,
Strength came to me that equal'd my
desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire!

"It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's will;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

"Moreover it is written that my race
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from
Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth." Here her face
Glow'd, as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips: she left me where I
stood:
"Glory to God," she sang, and past
afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans his
head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

"Alas! alas!" a low voice, full of care,
Murmur'd beside me: "Turn and look
on me:
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be.

"Would I had been some maiden coarse and
poor!
O me, that I should ever see the light!

Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night."

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and
trust:
To whom the Egyptian: "O, you tamely
died!
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and
thrust
The dagger thro' her side."

With that sharp sound the white dawn's
creeping beams,
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark,
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last
trance
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France;

Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish
Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her
king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labors longer from the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden
cre
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull
pain
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again!
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been
blest,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be express'd
By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest
art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

MARGARET.

I.

O SWEET pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
What lit your eyes with tearful power,
Like moonlight on a falling shower?
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower
Of pensive thought and aspect pale,
Your melancholy sweet and frail
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?
From the westward-winding flood,

From the evening-lighted wood,
 From all things outward you have won
 A tearful grace, as tho' you stood
 Between the rainbow and the sun.
 The very smile before you speak,
 That dimples your transparent cheek,
 Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
 The senses with a still delight
 Of dainty sorrow without sound,
 Like the tender amber round,
 Which the moon about her spreadeth,
 Moving thro' a fleecy night.

2.
 You love, remaining peacefully,
 To hear the murmur of the strife,
 But enter not the toil of life.
 Your spirit is the calmed sea,
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.
 You are the evening star, alway
 Remaining betwixt dark and bright :
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day
 Come to you, gleams of mellow light
 Float by you on the verge of night.

3.
 What can it matter, Margaret,
 What songs below the waning stars
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,
 Sang looking thro' his prison bars?
 Exquisite Margaret, who can tell
 The last wild thought of Chatelet,
 Just ere the fallen axe did part
 The burning brain from the true heart,
 Even in her sight he loved so well?

4.
 A fairy shield your Genius made
 And gave you on your natal day.
 Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
 Keeps real sorrow far away.
 You move not in such solitudes,
 You are not less divine,
 But more human in your moods,
 Than your twin-sister, Adeline.
 Your hair is darker, and your eyes
 Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,
 And less aerially blue
 But ever trembling thro' the dew
 Of dainty-woful sympathies.

5.
 O sweet pale Margaret,
 O rare pale Margaret,
 Come down, come down, and hear me speak:
 Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :
 The sun is just about to set.
 The arching limes are tall and shady,
 And faint, rainy lights are seen,
 Moving in the leafy beech.
 Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,
 Where all day long you sit between
 Joy and woe, and whisper each.
 Or only look across the lawn,
 Look out below your bower-eaves,
 Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn
 Upon me thro' the jasmine leaves.

THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD ! sing me something well :
 While all the neighbors shoot the round,
 I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
 Where thou may'st warble, eat, and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
 Are thine ; the range of lawn and park :
 The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
 All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the Spring,
 Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
 With that gold dagger of thy bill
 To fret the Summer jenneting.

A golden bill ! the silver tongue,
 Cold February loved, is dry :
 Plenty corrupts the melody
 That made thee famous once, when young :

And in the sultry garden-squares,
 Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,
 I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
 As when a hawk's hawks his wares.

Take warning ! he that will not sing
 While yon sun prospers in the blue,
 Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
 Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,
 And the winter winds are wearily sighing :
 Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
 And tread softly and speak low,
 For the old year lies a-dying.
 Old year you must not die ;
 You came to us so readily,
 You lived with us so steadily,
 Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :
 He will not see the dawn of day.
 He hath no other life above.
 He gave me a friend, and a true love
 And the New-year will take 'em away.
 Old year you must not go ;
 So long as you have been with us,
 Such joy as you have seen with us,
 Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;
 A jollier year we shall not see.
 But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
 And tho' his foes speak ill of him,
 He was a friend to me.
 Old year, you shall not die ;
 We did so laugh and cry with you,
 I've half a mind to die with you,
 Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
 But all his merry quips are o'er.
 To see him die across the waste
 His son and heir doth ride post-haste,

Something well :
shoot the round,
fruitful ground,
eat, and dwell.

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THE OLD YEAR

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But he'll be dead before.
Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my friend,
And the New-year blithe and bold, my
friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro :
The cricket chirps : the light burns low :
'T is nearly twelve o'clock.
Shake hands, before you die.
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you :
What is it we can do for you ?
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack ! our friend is gone,
Close up his eyes : tie up his chin :
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
And waiteth at the door.
There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,
And a new face at the door, my friend,
A new face at the door.

TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows
More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dare to flow
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'T is strange that those we lean on most,
Those in whose laps our limbs are
nursed,

Fall into shadow, soonest lost :
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. . . Something to love
He lends us ; but, when love is grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve,
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !
In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass ;
One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile — not speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair is seen
Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer : for this star
Rose with you thro' a little arc
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust
I honor and his living worth :

A man more pure and bold and just
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,
Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.
Great Nature is more wise than I :
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,
I will not even preach to you,
" Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain."

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her will
Be done — to weep or not to weep.

I will not say " God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind";
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How *should* I soothe you anyway,
Who miss the brother of your youth ?
Yet something I did wish to say :

For he too was a friend to me :
Both are my friends, and my true breast
Bleedeth for both : yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make
Grief more. 'T were better I should
cease ;
Although myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul.
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or strange,
Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas ?

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fulness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great —
Tho' every channel of the State
Should almost choke with golden sand —

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

Or old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet :
Above her shook the starry lights :
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then step she down thro' town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fulness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
And, King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our
dreams,

Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes !

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings,
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait for day,
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds ;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years ;
Cut Prejudice against the grain :
But gentle words are always gain :
Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch,
Of pension, neither count on praise :
It grows to guerdon after-days :
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch ;

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;
Not master'd by some modern term ;
Not swift or slow to change, but firm :
And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall
With Life, that, working strongly, binds —
Set in all lights by many minds,
To close the interests of all.

For Nature, also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Thro' many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that, which flies,
And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act ;
For all the past of Time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife
A motion toiling in the gloom —

The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
Completion in a painful school ;
Phantoms of other forms of rule,
New Majesties of mighty States —

The warders of the growing hour,
But vague in vapor, hard to mark ;
And round them sea and air are dark
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
Is bodied forth the second whole.
Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind ;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
And heap their ashes on the head ;
To shame the boast so often made,
That we are wiser than our sires.

O yet, if Nature's evil star
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war —

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock, like armed foes,
And this be true, till Time shall close,
That Principles are rain'd in blood ;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,
But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace ;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
Would serve his kind in deed and word,
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away —

Would love the gleams of good that broke
From either side, nor veil his eyes :
And if some dreadful need should rise
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
As we bear blossom of the dead ;
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

THE GOOSE.

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,
Her rags scarce held together ;
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,
He utter'd rhyme and reason,

" Here, take the goose, and keep you warm,
It is a stormy season."

She caught the white goose by the leg.
A goose — 't was no great matter.
The goose let fall a golden egg
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,
And ran to tell her neighbors ;
And bless'd herself, and curs'd herself,
And rested from her labors.

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able-bodied ;
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder ;
But ah ! the more the white goose laid
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there ;
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle :
She shifted in her elbow-chair,
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

" A quinsy choke thy cursed note !"
Then wax'd her anger stronger.
" Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,
I will not bear it longer."

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat ;
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer,
The goose flew this way and flew that,
And fill'd the house with clamor.

As head and heels upon the floor
They floundered all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather :

He took the goose upon his arm,
He utter'd words of scorning ;
" So keep you cold, or keep you warm,
It is a stormy morning."

The wild wind rang from park and plain,
And round the attics rumbled,
Till all the tables danced again,
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
The blast was hard and harder.
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder ;

And while on all sides breaking loose
Her household fled the danger,
Quoth she, " The Devil take the goose,
And God forget the stranger !"

ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS.

(PUBLISHED 1842.)

THE EPIC.

AT Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve, —
The game of forfeits done — the girls all kiss'd
Beneath the sacred bush and past away —
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,
Then half-way ebb'd: and there we held a
talk,

How all the old honor had from Christmas
gone,

Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,
Where, three times slipping from the outer
edge,

I bump'd the ice into three several stars,
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commissioners,
Now hawking at Geology and schism;
Until I woke, and found him settled down
Upon the general decay of faith
Right thro' the world, "at home was little left,
And none abroad: there was no anchor, none,
To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt his
hand

On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold by
him."

"And I," quoth Everard, "by the wassail-
bowl."

"Why yes," I said, "we knew your gift that
way

At college: but another which you had
I mean of verse (for so we held it then,) —
What came of that?" "You know," said
Frank, "he burnt

His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve
books" —

And then to me demanding why? "O, sir,
He thought that nothing new was said, or else
Something so said 'twas nothing — that a
truth

Looks freshest in the fashion of the day:
God knows: he has a mint of reasons: ask.
It pleased me well enough." "Nay, nay,"
said Hall,

"Why take the style of those heroic times?
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,
Nor we those times; and why should any man
Remodel models? these twelve books of mine
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt."

"But I,"

Said Francis, "pick'd the eleventh from this
hearth,

And have it: keep a thing, its use will come.
I heard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."

He laugh'd, and I, though sleepy, like a horse

That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears;
For I remember'd Everard's college fame
When we were Freshmen: then at my request
He brought it; and the poet little urged,
But with some prelude of disparagement,
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonness about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was
deep,

The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a
sleep

They sleep — the men I loved. I think that
we

Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.

I perish by this people which I made, —
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more — but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest
how

In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword — and how I rowed across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me
word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,

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Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruined shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, step-
ping down

By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran
forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond studs,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou performed my mission which I
gave?"

What is it thou hast seen or what hast
heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and
pale:

"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy
name,

Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me
word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curious, and strangely chased, he
smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud.

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many
men.

What good should follow this, if this were
done?

What harm, undone? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?

The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath

And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty
kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were
lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heav-
ily:

"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in
wrath:

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou
art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee
hence:

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the
sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great
brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in
an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Cloth'd in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd
him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker
breath:

"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or
seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the
gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I rang him, wheeling

him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd

him
Three times, and drew him under in the
mere.

And answer made King Arthur, breathing
hard:

"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were
gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my
weight,

And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,

And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere

Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not

words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid

hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted
hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the

King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear "Quick,

quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to
ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he
walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry

Before. His own thought drove him like a
goad.

Dry clasp'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right

The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he
based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—

And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky
barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were

ware
That all the decks were dense with stately
forms

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—
by these

Three Queens with crowns of gold—and
from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony

Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills

All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the
barge,"

And to the barge they came. There these
three Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King,
and wept.

But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,

And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed
his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow

Striped with dark blood: for all his face was
white

And colorless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing

east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with
drops

Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun

High from the dais-throne—were parch'd
with dust;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed

his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;

Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,

Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?

Where shall I hide my forehead and my
eyes?

For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,

And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light hath

led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.

But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;

And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,

Among new men, strange faces, other minds."
And slowly answer'd Arthur from the

barge;
"The old order changeth, yielding place to
new,

And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the

world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?

I have lived my life, and that which I have
done

May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought
by prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let
thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats

That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer

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Both for themselves and those who call them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go —
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-
lawns

And bowery hollows crown'd with summer
sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted
swan —

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the
flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of
dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that
long

Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared
and fell:

At which the Parson, sent to sleep with
sound,

And waked with silence, grunted "Good!"
but we

Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read —
Perhaps some modern touches here and there
Redeem'd it from the charge of nothing-
ness —

Or else we loved the man, and prized his
work;

I know not: but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud; as at that time of year

The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,

"There now — that's nothing!" drew a little
back,

And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue:

And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seem'd
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,

Point after point; till on to dawn, when
dreams

Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,

There came a bark that, blowing forward,
bore

King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,

"Arthur is come again: he cannot die."
Then those that stood upon the hills behind

Repeated — "Come again, and thrice as
fair";

And, further inland, voices echoed — "Come
With all good things, and war shall be no
more."

At this a hundred bells began to peal,

That with the sound I woke, and heard in-
deed
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas
morn.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER; OR, THE PICTURES.

THIS morning is the morning of the day,
When I and Eustace from the city went
To see the Gardener's Daughter; I and he,
Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete
Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew
The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws
The greater to the lesser, long desired
A certain miracle of symmetry,

A miniature of loveliness, all grace
Summ'd up and closed in little; — Juliet, she
So light of foot, so light of spirit — oh, she
To me myself, for some three careless moons,
The summer pilot of an empty heart

Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not
Such touches are but embassies of love,
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,
And said to me, she sitting with us then,
"When will you paint like this?" and I re-
plied,

(My words were half in earnest, half in jest.)
"T is not your work, but Love's. Love,
unperceived,

A more ideal Artist he than all,
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those
eyes

Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
More black than ashbuds in the front of
March."

And Juliet answer'd laughing, "Go and see
The Gardener's daughter: trust me, after
that,

You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece."
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.

News from the humming city comes to it
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;

And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
The windy clanging of the minster clock;

Although between it and the garden lies
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad
stream,

That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crown'd with the minster towers.

The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd
kine,

And all about the large lime feathers low,
The lime a summer home of murmurous
wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,
Grew, seldom seen: not less among us lived
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard

Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where
was he,

So blunt in memory, so old as heart,
At such a distance from his youth in grief,
That, having seen, forgot? The common
mouth

So gross to express delight, in praise of her
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.
And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,
Would play with flying forms and images,
Yet this is also true, that, long before
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name
My heart was like a prophet to my heart
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,
That sought to sow themselves like winged
seeds,

Born out of everything I heard and saw,
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm
To one that travels quickly, made the air
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,
That verged upon them, sweeter than the
dream

Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark
East,

Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.
And sure this orbit of the memory folds
Forever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery squares
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large
cloud

Drew downward; but all else of Heaven was
pure

Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,
And May with me from head to heel. And
now,

As tho' 't were yesterday, as tho' it were
The hour just flown, that morn with all its
sound,

(For those old Mays had thrice the life of
these.)

Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to
graze,

And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway,
stood,

Leaning his horns into the neighbor field,
And loving to his fellows. From the woods
Came voices of the well-contented doves.

The lark could scarce get out his notes for
joy

But shook his song together as he near'd
His happy home, the ground. To left and
right,

The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;

The redcap whistled; and the nightingale
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to
me,

"Hear how the bushes echo I by my life,
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think
you they sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song?
Or have they any sense of why they sing?

And would they praise the heavens for what
they have?"

And I made answer, "Were there nothing
else

For which to praise the heavens but only
love,

That only love were cause enough for praise."

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my
thought,

And on we went; but ere an hour had pass'd,
We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North;

Down which a well-worn pathway courted us
To one green wicket in a privet hedge;

This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;

And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume,
blew

Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
The garden stretches southward. In the midst

A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.
The garden-glasses shone, and momentarily

The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.
"Eustace," I said, "this wonder keeps
the house."

He nodded, but a moment afterwards
He cried, "Look! look!" Before he ceased

I turn'd,
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern
rose,

That, flowering high, the last night's gale
had caught,

And blown across the walk. ~~Our~~ arm aloft—
Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the
shape—

Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.
A single stream of all her soft brown hair

Pour'd on one side: the shadow of the flowers
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering

Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—
Ah, happy shade—and still went wavering
down,

But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have
danced

The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
And mix'd with shadows of the common
ground!

But the full day dwelt on her brows, and
sunn'd

Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe-bloom,
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,

And on the bounteous wave of such a breast
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,

She stood, a sight to make an old man young.
So rapt, we near'd the house; but she, a
Rose

In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance
turn'd

Into the world without; till close at hand,
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,

This murmur broke the stillness of that air
Which brooded round about her:

"Ah, one rose,
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull'd,
Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on lips
Less exquisite than mine."

She look'd; but all
Suffused with blushes—neither self-pos-
sess'd

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Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,
Divided in a graceful quiet — paused,
And dropt the branch she held, and turning,
wound

Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her lips
For some sweet answer, tho' no answer came,
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,
In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,
Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star
Beant'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the dusk.

So home we went, and all the livelong way
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.
"Now," said he, "will you climb the top of
Art.

You cannot fail but work in hues to dim
The Titanic Flora. Will you match
My Juliet? you, not you, — the Master,
Love,

A more ideal Artist he than all."

So home I went, but could not sleep for joy,
Reading her perfect features in the gloom,
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,
And shaping faithful record of the glance
That graced the giving — such a noise of life
Swarm'd in the golden present, such a voice
Call'd to me from the years to come, and such
A length of bright horizon rimm'd the dark.
And all that night I heard the watchmen peal
The sliding season: all that night I heard
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours.
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,
Distilling odors on me as they went
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all,
Made this night thus. Henceforward squall
nor storm

Could keep me from that Eden where she
dwelt.

Light pretexs drew me: sometimes a Dutch
love

For tulips; then for roses, moss or musk,
To grace my city-rooms: or fruits and cream
Served in the weeping elm; and more and
more

A word could bring the color to my cheek;
A thought would fill my eyes with happy
dew;

Love trebled life within me, and with each
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,
One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd:
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade;
And each in passing touch'd with some new
grace

Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,
Like one that never can be wholly known,
Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought an
hour

For Eustace, when I heard his deep "I will,"
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold
From thence thro' all the worlds: but I rose
up

Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes

Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd
The wicket-gate, and found her standing
there.

There sat we down upon a garden mound,
Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,
Between us, in the circle of his arms
Enwound us both; and over many a range
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,
Reveal'd their shining windows: from them
clash'd

The bells; we listen'd; with the time we
play'd;

We spoke of other things: we coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near and
near,

Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round
The central wish, until we settled there.

Then, in that time and place, I spoke to
her,

Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;
And in that time and place she answer'd me,
And in the compass of three little words,
More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken voice,
Made me most happy, faltering "I am
thine."

Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,
Merged in completion? Would you learn at
full

How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades
Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed
I had not stay'd so long to tell you all,
But while I mused came Memory with sad
eyes,

Holding the folded annals of my youth;
And while I mused, Love with knit brows
went by,

And with a flying finger swept my lips,
And spake, "Be wise: not easily forgiven
Are those, who, setting wide the doors that
bar

The secret bridal chambers of the heart,
Let in the day." Here, then, my words have
end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells —
Of that which came between, more sweet
than each,

In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves
That tremble round a nightingale — in sighs
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance,
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell
Of difference, reconciliation, pledges given,
And vows, where there was never need of
vows,

And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above
The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale
Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,
Spread the light haze along the river-shores,
And in the hollows; or as once we met
Unheeded, tho' beneath a whispering rain

Night slid down one long stream of sighing
wind,
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.
But this whole hour your eyes have been
intent
On that veil'd picture — veil'd, for what it
holds
May not be dwelt on by the common day.
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy
soul;
Make thine heart ready with thine eyes; the
time
Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,
My first, last love; the idol of my youth,
The darling of my manhood, and, alas!
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

DORA.

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,
And often thought "I'll make them man and
wife."

Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd towards William; but the youth,
because

He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and said, "My
son:

I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die:
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter: he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora; take her for your wife;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and
day,

For many years." But William answer'd
short:

"I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
I will not marry Dora." Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and
said:

"You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
But in my time a father's word was law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it:
Consider, William: take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish;
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
And never more darken my doors again."
But William answer'd madly; bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he look'd at her
The less he liked her; and his ways were
harsh;

But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
The month was out he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan
call'd

His niece and said: "My girl, I love you well;
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law."
And Dora promised, being meek. She
thought,

"It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change!"

And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William; then distresses came on him;
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not,
But Dora stored what little she could save,
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they
know

Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. May sat
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and
thought

Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:

"I have obey'd my uncle until now,
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this: 'phan, I am come to you:
You know there has not been for these five
years

So full a harvest: let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's
gone."

And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not; for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers
reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and
took

The child once more, and sat upon the mound;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said: "Where were you yes-
terday?

Whose child is that! What are you doing
here?"

So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, "This is William's
child!"

"And did I not," said Allan, "did I not
Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again,
"Do with me as you will, but take the child
And bless him for the sake of him that's
gone!"

And Allan said, "I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.

ringing, Allan

I love you well;
 That was born a boy,
 He calls his wife,
 "My will is law."
 He meek. She

and will change!"
 He came on him;
 His father's gate,
 Help'd him not,
 He could save,
 Nor did they

er seized
 He died.
 Mary sat
 her boy, and

came and said:
 "Till now,
 All thro' me
 the first,
 That's gone,
 That he chose,
 He to you:
 For these five

the boy,
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 His heart is glad
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 n there.

I must be taught my duty, and by you!
 You knew my word was law, and yet you
 dared

To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;
 But go you hence, and never see me more."
 So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud
 And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers
 fell

At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
 And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
 More and more distant. She bow'd down
 her head,

Remembering the day when first she came,
 And all the things that had been. She
 bow'd down

And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,
 And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and
 stood

Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
 Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
 To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
 And Dora said, "My uncle took the boy;
 But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
 He says that he will never see me more."
 Then answer'd Mary, "This shall never be,
 That thou shouldst take my trouble on thy-
 self:

And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
 For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
 His mother; therefore thou and I will go
 And I will have my boy, and bring him home;
 And I will beg of him to take thee back;
 But if he will not take thee back again,
 Then thou and I will live within one house,
 And work for William's child, until he grows
 Of age to help us."

So the women kiss'd
 Each other, and set out, and reach'd the
 farm.

The door was off the latch: they peep'd, and
 saw

The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
 Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
 And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
 Like one that loved him; and the lad
 stretch'd out

And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
 From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the
 fire.

Then they came in: but when the boy
 beheld

His mother, he cried out to come to her:
 And Allan set him down, and Mary said:

"O Father—if you let me call you so—
 I never came a-begging for myself,
 Or William, or this child; but now I come
 For Dora: take her back; she loves you
 well.

O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
 With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said,
 He could not ever rue his marrying me—
 I had been a patient wife: but, Sir, he said
 That he was wrong to cross his father thus:
 'God bless him!' he said, 'and may he
 never know

The troubles I have gone thro'!' Then he
 turn'd

His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am!
 But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
 Will make him hard, and he will learn to
 slight

His father's memory; and take Dora back,
 And let all this be as it was before."

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
 By Mary. There was silence in the room;
 And all at once the old man burst in sobb's:

"I have been to blame—to blame. I
 have kill'd my son.

I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my
 dear son.

May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.
 Kiss me, my children."

Then they clung about
 The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many
 times.

And all the man was broken with remorse;
 And all his love came back a hundred fold;
 And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's
 child,

Thinking of William.

So those four abode
 Within one house together; and as years
 Went forward, Mary took another mate;
 But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

AUDLEY COURT.

"THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and
 not a room

For love or money. Let us picnic there
 At Audley Court."

I spoke, while Audley feast
 Humm'd like a hive all round the narrow
 quay,

To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
 To Francis just alighted from the boat,
 And breathing of the sea. "With all my
 heart,"

Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro' the
 swarm,

And rounded by the stillness of the beach
 To where the bay runs up its latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd
 The flat red granite; so by many a sweep
 Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd
 The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro'
 all

The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,
 And cross'd the garden to the gardener's
 lodge,

With all its casements bedded, and its walls
 And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid
 A damask napkin wrought with horse and
 hound,

Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,
 And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly made,
 Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,
 Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks
 Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,
 A flask of cider from his father's vats,
 Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat
 And talk'd old matters over: who was dead,
 Who married, who was like to be, and how

The races went, and who would rent the hall:
Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was

This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,

The fourfield system, and the price of grain;
And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,

And came again together on the king
With heated faces; till he laugh'd aloud;
And, while the blackbird on the pipkin hung
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang:

"O, who would fight and march and counter-march,

Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,
And shovell'd up into a bloody trench
Where no one knows? but let me live my life.

"O, who would cast and balance at a desk,
Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,
Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints
Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.

"Who'd serve the state? for if I carved my name

Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,
I might as well have traced it in the sands;
The sea wastes all: but let me live my life.

"O, who would love? I wou'd a woman once,

But she was sharper than an eastern wind,
And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn
Turns from the sea: but let me live my life."

He sang his song, and I replied with mine:
I found it in a volume, all of songs,
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,

His books — the more the pity, so I said —
Came to the hammer here in March — and this —

I set the words, and added names I knew.
"Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me:

Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

"Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,

For thou art fairer than all else that is.

"Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast:
Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip:

I go to-night: I come to-morrow morn.

"I go, but I return: I would I were
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.

Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me."

So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,
The farmer's son who lived across the bay,
My friend; and I, that having wherewithal,
And in the fallow leisure of my life,
Did what I would: but ere the night we rose

And saunter'd home beneath a moon, that, just

In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd

The limit of the hills; and as we sank
From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,
The town was hush'd beneath us: lower down

The bay was oily-calm; the harbor-buoy
With one green sparkle ever and anon
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

WALKING TO THE MAIL.

John. I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows look

Above the river, and, but a month ago,
The whole hillside was redder than a fox.
Is yon plantation where this byway joins
The turnpike?

James. Yes.

John. And when does this come by?

James. The mail? At one o'clock.

John. What is it now?

James. A quarter to.

John. Whose house is that I see?

No, not the County Member's with the vane:
Up higher with the yewtree by it, and half
A score of gables.

James. That? Sir Edward Head's:
But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.

John. O, his. He was not broken.

James. No, sir, he,
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood
That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid his face

From all men, and commercing with himself,
He lost the sense that handles daily life —

That keeps us all in order more or less —

And sick of home went overseas for change.

John. And whither?

James. Nay, who knows? he's here and there.

But let him go; his devil goes with him,

As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

John. What's that?

James. You saw the man — on Monday, was it? —

There by the humpback'd willow; half stands up

And bristles; half has fall'n and made a bridge;

And there he caught the younker tickling trout —

Caught in *flagrante* — what's the Latin word? —

Delicto: but his house, for so they say,
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies, tap'd at doors,

And rummaged like a rat: no servant stay'd:
The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,

And all his household stuff: and with his boy
Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,

Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, "What!

You're sitting!" "Yes, we're sitting," says the ghost,

(For they had pack'd the thing among the beds.)

"O well,

to

Jack,

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harbor-buoy
and anon
ad at heart.

MAIL.

How fresh the

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than a fox.
yway joins

this come by?
o'clock.
hat is it now?

is that I see?
with the vane:
it, and half

ward Head's:
o be sold,
broken.

No, sir, he,
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with his boy
he tilt,
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ting," says

among the

"O well," says he, "you flitting with us too —

Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again."

John. He left his wife behind; for so I heard.

James. He left her, yes. I met my lady once:

A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

John. O yet but I remember, ten years back —

'T is now at least ten years — and then she was —

You could not light upon a sweeter thing:

A body slight and round, and like a pear

In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot

Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin

As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

James. Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved

At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.

She was the daughter of a cottager,

Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and

pride,

New things and old, himself and her, she

sour'd

To what she is: a nature never kind!

Like men, like manners: like breeds like, they say.

Kind nature is the best: those manners next

That fit us like a nature second-hand;

Which are indeed the manners of the great.

John. But I had heard it was this bill

that past,

And fear of change at home, that drove him

hence.

James. That was the last drop in his cup

of gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff brought

A Chartist pike. You should have seen him

wince

As from a venomous thing: he thought him-

self

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry

Should break his sleep by night, and his nice

eyes

Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs

Sweat on his blazon'd chairs; but, sir, you

know

That these two parties still divide the world —

Of those that want, and those that have: and

still

The same old sore breaks out from age to age

With much the same result. Now I myself,

A Tory to the quick, was as a boy

Destructive, when I had not what I would.

I was at school — a college in the South:

There lived a flayflint near: we stole his fruit,

His hens, his eggs; but there was law for us;

We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,

With meditative grunts of much content,

Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and

mud.

By night we dragg'd her to the college tower

From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew

stair

With hand and rope we haled the groaning

sow,

And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd.
Large range of prospect had the mother sow,
And but for daily loss of one she loved,
As one by one we took them — but for this —
As never sow was higher in this world —
Might have been happy: but what lot is
pure?

We took them all, till she was left alone
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

John. They found you out?

James. Not they.

John. Well — after all —

What know we of the secret of a man?

His nerves were wrong. What ails us, who

are sow'd,

That we should mimic this raw fool the

world,

Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or

whites,

As ruthless as a baby with a worm,

As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows

To Pity — more from ignorance than will.

But put your best foot forward, or I fear

That we shall miss the mail: and here it

comes

With five at top: as quaint a four-in-hand

As you shall see — three piebalds and a roan.

EDWIN MORRIS; OR, THE LAKE.

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake.

My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a

year,

My one Oasis in the dust and drouth

Of city life: I was a sketcher then:

See here, my doing: curves of mountain,

bridge,

Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built

When men knew how to build, upon a rock,

With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock:

And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,

New-comers from the Mersey, millionnaires,

Here lived the Hills — a Tudor-chimneyed

bulk

Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake

With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull

The curate; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the

names,

Long learned names of agaric, moss, and

fern,

Who forged a thousand theories of the rocks,

Who taught me how to skate, to row, to swim,

Who read me rhymes elaborately good,

His own — I call'd him Crichton, for he

seem'd

All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early life,

And his first passion; and he answer'd me;

And well his words became him: was he not

A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence

Stored from all flowers? Poet-like he spoke.

"My love for Nature is as old as I ;
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,
And three rich sennights more, my love for
her.

My love for Nature and my love for her,
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.
To some full music rose and sank the sun,
And some full music seem'd to move and
change

With all the varied changes of the dark,
And either twilight and the day between ;
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to breathe, to wake."

Or this or something like to this he spoke.
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull :

"I take it, God made the woman for the
man,
And for the good and increase of the world.
A pretty face is well, and this is well,
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,
And keeps us tight ; but these unreal ways
Seem but the theme of writers, and indeed
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff.
I say, God made the woman for the man,
And for the good and increase of the world."

"Parson," said I, "you pitch the pipe too
low :

But I have sudden touches, and can run
My faith beyond my practice into his :
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
I scarce hear other music : yet say on.
What should one give to light on such a
dream ?"

I ask'd him half-sardonically.

"Give?
Give all thou art," he answer'd, and a light
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek ;
"I would have hid her needle in my heart,
To save her little finger from a scratch
No deeper than the skin : my ears could hear
Her lightest breaths : her least remark was
worth

The experience of the wise. I went and
came ;
Her voice fled always thro' the summer land ;
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days !
The flower of each, those moments when we
met,
The crown of all, we met to part no more."

Were not his words delicious, I a beast
To take them as I did ? but something jarr'd ;
Whether he spoke too largely ; that there
seem'd
A touch of something false, some self-conceit,
Or over-smoothness : howsoever it was,
He scarcely hit my humor, and I said :

"Friend Edwin, do not think yourself
alone
Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,

Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and
left ?

But you can talk : yours is a kindly vein :
I have, I think, — Heaven knows — as much
within ;

Have, or should have, but for a thought or
two,

That like a purple beech among the greens
Looks out of place : 't is from no want in her :
It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,
Or something of a wayward modern mind
Dissecting passion. Time will set me right."

So spoke I knowing not the things that
were.

Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull :
"God made the woman for the use of man,
And for the good and increase of the world."
And I and Edwin laugh'd ; and now we
paused

About the windings of the marge to hear
The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms
And alders, garden-isles ; and now we left
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran
By ripply shallows of the lipping lake,
Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their
crag,

My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him
That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,
The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.

'T is true, we met ; one hour I had, no more :
She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,
The close "Your Letty, only yours" ; and
this

Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of
morn

Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran
My craft aground, and heard with beating
heart

The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving
keel :

And out I stept, and up I crept ; she moved,
Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers :
Then low and sweet I whistled thrice ; and
she,

She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith,
I breathed

In some new planet : a silent cousin stole
Upon us and departed : "Leave," she cried,
"O leave me !" "Never, dearest, never :
here

I brave the worst" : and while we stood like
fools

Embracing, all at once a score of pugs
And poodles yell'd within, and out they
came

Trustees and Aunts and Uncles. "What,
with him !"

"Go" (shrill'd the cottonspinning chorus)
"him !"

I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen
"Him !"

Again with hands of wild rejection "Go ! —
Girl, get you in !" She went — and in one
month

They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,

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To lands in Kent and messuages in York,
And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile
And educated whisker. But for me,
They set an ancient creditor to work :
It seems I broke a close with force and arms :
There came a mystic token from the king
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy !
I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd ;
Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below :
I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the
storm ;

So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to
hear.

Nor cared to hear? perhaps : yet long ago
I have pardon'd little Letty : not indeed,
It may be, for her own dear sake but this,
She seems a part of those fresh days to me ;
For in the dust and drouth of London life
She moves among my visions of the lake,
While the prime swallow dips his wing, or
then

While the gold-lily blows, and overhead
The light cloud smoulders on the summer
crag.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of
sin,

Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn, and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of
prayer,

Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.
Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes
and cramps,

A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet,
and snow ;

And I had hoped that ere this period closed
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy
rest,

Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
The meed of saints, the white robe and the
palm.

O take the meaning, Lord : I do not
breathe,
Not whisper any murmur of complaint,
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were
still

Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,
Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that
crush'd

My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,
For I was strong and hale of body then ;
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,

Would chatter with the cold, and all my
beard

Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with
sound

Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes
saw

An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
Now am I feeble grown ; my end draws
nigh ;

I hope my end draws nigh : half deaf I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum
About the column's base, and almost blind,
And scarce can recognize the fields I know ;
And both my ears are rotted with the dew ;
Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,
Till as my limbs drop piecemeal from the
stone.

Have mercy, mercy : take away my sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?
For either they were stoned, or crucified,
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn
In twain beneath the ribs ; but I die here
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.
Bear witness, if I could have found a way
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)
More slowly painful to subdue this home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,
I had not stinted practice, O my God.

For not alone this pillar-punishment,
Not this alone I bore : but while I lived
In the white convent down the valley there,
For many weeks about my loins I wore
The rope that hal'd the buckets from the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose ;
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all
My brethren marvel'd greatly. More than
this

I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.
Three winters, that my soul might grow to
thee,

I lived up there on yonder mountain side.
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones ;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist,
and twice

Black'd with thy branding thunder, and
sometimes

Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,
Except the spare chance-gift of those that
came

To touch my body and be heal'd, and live :
And they say then that I work'd miracles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst man-
kind,

Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O
God,

Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy ; cover all my sin.

Then, that I might be more alone with
thee,

Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;
And twenty three years I crouch'd on one that

rose
Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew,
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as
this —

Or else I dream — and for so long a time,
If I may measure time by yon slow light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow

crowns —
So much — even so.

And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones come here, and say,
"Fall down, O Simeon: thou hast suffer'd
long

For ages and for ages!" then they prate
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies,
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are
choked.

But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the
saints
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on
earth

House in the shade of comfortable roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome
food,

And wear warm clothes, and even beasts
have stalls,
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,
Bow down one thousand and two hundred
times,

To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the
Saints;

Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake: the chill stars sparkle; I am wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling
frost,

I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back;
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die:
O mercy, mercy! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin:
'Tis their own doing; this is none of mine;
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,
That here come those that worship me? Ha!

They think that I am somewhat. What
am I?

The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers;
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)
Have all in all endured as much, and more
Than many just and holy men, whose names
Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.
What is it I can have done to merit this!
I am a sinner viler than you all.
It may be I have wrought some miracles,
And cured some halt and maim'd; but what
of that?

It may be, no one, even among the saints,
May match his pains with mine; but what
of that?

Yet do not rise: for you may look on me,
And in your looking you may kneel to God.
Speak! is there any of ye halt or maim'd?
I think you know I have some power with
Heaven

From my long penance: let him speak his
wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth
from me.

They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark!
they shout

"St. Simeon Stylites." Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,
Can I work miracles and not be saved?
This is not told of any. They were saints.
It cannot be but that I shall be saved;
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, "Behold
a saint!"

And lower voices saint me from above.
Courage, St. Simeon! This dull chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death
Spreads more and more and more, that God
hath now

Sponged and made blank of crime's record
all
My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,
The watcher on the column till the end;
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here proclaim
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I
lay,

A vessel full of sin: all hell beneath
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my
sleeve;

Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.
I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd
again.

In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my
chest:

They flapp'd my light out as I read: I saw
Their faces grow between me and my book:
With colt-like whinny and with hoggish
whine

They burst my prayer. Yet this way was
left,

And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with
thorns;

Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be,
fast

Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow
steps,

With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding
pain,

Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that
still

Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the
praise;

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God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,
Among the powers and princes of this world,
To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say
But that a time may come — yea, even now,
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold
stairs

Offlife — I say, that time is at the doors
When you may worship me without reproach;
For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloud-like
change,

In passing, with a grosser film made thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!
Surely the end! What's here? a shape, a
shade,

A flash of light. Is that the angel there.
That holds a crown? Come, blessed brother,
come.

I know thy glittering face. I waited long;
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it.
Christ!

'Tis gone: 't is here again: the crown! the
crown!

So now 't is fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and
frankincense.

Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints: I trust
That I am whole and clean, and meet for
Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
Among you there, and let him presently
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament:
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let them take
Example, pattern: lead them to thy light.

THE TALKING OAK.

Once more the gate behind me falls;
Once more before my face
I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
Beneath its drift of smoke;
And ah! with what delighted eyes
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
Ere that, which in me burn'd,
The love, that makes me thrice a man,
Could hope itself return'd;

To yonder oak within the field
I spoke without restraint,

And with a larger faith appeal'd
Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagiarized a heart,
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd, under Heaven
None else could understand;
I found him garrulously given,
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour;
'T were well to question him, and try
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knee in fern,
Broad Oak of Summer-cinace,
Whose topmost branches can discern
The roofs of Summer-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs. —

"O Walter, I have shelter'd here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old Summers, year by year,
Made ripe in Summer-chace:

"Old Summers, when the monk was fat
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
The girls upon the cheek,

"Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
And number'd bead and shrift,
Bluff Harry broke into the spence,
And turn'd the cowl's adrift:

"And I have seen some score of those
Fresh faces that would thrive
When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five;

"And all that from the town would stroll,
Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork:

"The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
For puritanic stays:

"And I have shadow'd many a group
Of beauties that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn;

"And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leap'd and laugh'd
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

"I swear (and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all;

"For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia bow,

"From when she gamboll'd on the greens,
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

"I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,
(And hear me with thine ears.)
That, tho' I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years—

"Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass:

"For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh."

O, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
And overlook the chace;
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Summer-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

"O yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town:
Her father left his good arm-chair,
And rode his hunter down.

"And with him Albert came on his,
I look'd at him with joy;
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
So seems she to the boy.

"An hour had past—and, sitting straight
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled grays.

"But, as for her, she stay'd at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you use to come
She look'd with discontent.

"She left the novel half-uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf;
She left the new piano shut:
She could not please herself.

"Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark

She sent her voice thro' all the holt
Before her, and the park.

"A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child:

"But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

"And here she came, and round me play'd,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my 'giant bole';

"And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist:
Alas, I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

"I wish'd myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have lock'd her hands.

"Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet
As woodbine's fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold."

O muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Summer-chace!
Long may thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Summer-place!

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart I came
To rest beneath thy boughs?

"O yes, she wander'd round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kiss'd the name she found,
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

"A teardrop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept."

"Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,
She glanced across the plain;
But not a creature was in sight:
She kiss'd me once again.

"Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr'd:

"And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern'd,
Like those blind motions of the Spring,
That show the year is turn'd.

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"Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm —
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden's tender palm.

"I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust :

"For ah ! my friend, the days were brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.

"But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have suck'd and gather'd into one
The life that spreads in them,

"She had not found me so remiss ;
But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for kiss
With usury thereto."

O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well ;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

"Tis little more ; the day was warm ;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm,
And at my feet she lay.

"Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves,
I breathed upon her eyes
Thro' all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

"I took the swarming sound of life —
The music from the town —
The murmurs of the drum and fife
And lull'd them in my own.

"Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye ;
A second flutter'd round her lip
Like a golden butterfly ;

"A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine ;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine.

"Then close and dark my arms I spread,
And shadow'd all her rest —
Dropt dews upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

"But in a pet she started up,
And pluck'd it out, and drew

My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

"And yet it was a graceful gift —
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

"I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O kiss him once for me.

"O kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this."

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further thro' the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Summer-place

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
That but a moment lay
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To ripen life may magnetize
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land.

May ne never saw dismember thee,
Nor with an axe disjoint,
That art the fairest-spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery top
All throats that gurgle sweet !
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

All grass of silky feather grow —
And while he sinks or swells
The rull south-breeze around thee blow —
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes !
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes !

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep !

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honor'd beech or lime,
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdoves sat,
And mystic sentence spoke;
And more than England honors that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And humm'd a weary Lyman.

LOVE AND DUTY.

Or love that never found his earthly close,
What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking
hearts?

Or all the same as if he had not been?
Not so. Shall Error in the round of time
Still father Truth? O shall the braggart
about

For some blind glimpse of freedom work
itself

Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law
System and empire? Sin itself be found
The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?
And only he, this wonder, dead, become
Mere highway dust! or year by year alone
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,
Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,
The long mechanic paces to and fro,
The set gray life, and apathetic end.
But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?
O three times less unworthy! likewise thou
Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy
years.

The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will
bring

The drooping flower of knowledge changed
to fruit

Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in
Time,

And that which shapes it to some perfect end.
Will some one say, then why not ill for
good?

Why took ye not your pastime? To that
man

My work shall answer, since I knew the right
And did it: for a man is not as God,
But then most Godlike being most a man.

— So let me think 't is well for thee and
me —

Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine
Whose foresight preaches pence, my heart so
slow

To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to me,
When eyes, love-languid thro' half-tears,
would dwell

One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,
Then not to dare to see I when thy low voice,
Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep
My own full-tuned, — hold passion in a leash,
And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,
And on thy bosom, (deep-desired relief!)
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weigh'd
Upon my brain, my senses, and my soul!
For Love himself took part against him-
self

To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love —
O this world's curse, — beloved but hated —
came

Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and
mine,

And crying, "Who is this? behold thy
bride,"

She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard

To alien ears, I did not speak to these —
No, not to thee, but to myself in thee:
Hard is my doom and thine: thou knowest
it all.

Could Love part thus? was it not well to
speak,

To have spoken once? It could not but be
well.

The slow sweet hours that bring us all things
good,

The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,
And all good things from evil, brought the
night

In which we sat together and alone,
And to the want, that hollow'd all the heart,
Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,
That burn'd upon its object thro' such tears
As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way
To those caresses, when a hundred times
In that last kiss, which never was the last,
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and
died.

Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the words
That make a man feel strong in speaking
truth;

Till now the dark was worn, and overhead
The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd
In that brief night; the summer night, that
paused

Among her stars to hear us; stars that hung
Love-charm'd to listen: all the wheels of
Time

Spun round in station, but the end had come.
O then like those, who clench their nerves
to rush

Upon their dissolution, we two rose
There — closing like an individual
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,
Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,
Caught up the whole of love and star'd it,
And bade adieu forever.

Live — yet live —
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all
Life needs for life is possible to win —
Live happy; tend thy flowers; be tender by

My blessing! Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts

Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou
For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold,
If not to be forgotten — not at once —
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,

O might it come like one that looks content,
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,
And point thee forward to a distant light,
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart
And leave thee freer, till thou wake refresh'd,
Then when the low matin-chirp hath grown
Full choir, and morning driv'n her plough of pearl

Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

THE GOLDEN YEAR.

WELL, you shall have that song which Leonard wrote:

It was last summer on a tour in Wales:
Old James was with me: we that day had been

Up Snowden; and I wish'd for Leonard there,

And found him in Llambris: then we crost
Between the lakes, and clamber'd half way up
The counter side; and that same song of his
He told me; for I banter'd him, and swore
They said he lived shut up within himself,
A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,
That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,
Cry, like the daughters of the horse-leech,

"Give,
Cram us with all," but count not me the herd!
To which "They call me what they will,"
he said:

"But I was born too late: the fair new forms,
That float about the threshold of an age,
Like truths of Science waiting to be caught —
Catch me who can, and make the catcher crown'd —

Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.
But if you care indeed to listen, hear
These measured words, my work of yesternorn.

"We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move:

The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun;
The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her ellipse;

And human things returning on themselves
Move onward, leading up the golden year.

"Ah, tho' the times, when some new thought can bud,

Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,
Yet seas, that daily gain upon the shore,
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.

"When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,

But smit with freer light shall slowly melt
In many streams to fatten lower lands,
And light shall spread, and man be liker man
Thro' all the season of the golden year.

"Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?

If all the world were falcons, what of that?
The wonder of the eagle were the less,
But he not less the eagle. Happy days
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

"Fly happy happy sails and bear the Press;

Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,

Enrich the markets of the golden year.

"But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good

Be each man's rule, and universal Peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Thro' all the circle of the golden year?"

Thus far he flow'd, and ended; whereupon
"Ah, folly!" in mimic cadence answer'd

James —

"Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,
Not in our time, nor in our children's time,
'T is like the second world to us that live;
'T were all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven
As on this vision of the golden year."

With that he struck his staff against the rocks

And broke it, — James, — you know him, — old, but full

Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,
O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis:
Then added, all in heat:

"What stuff is this!
Old writers push'd the happy season back, —
The more fools they, — we forward: dreamers both:

You most, that in an age, when every hour
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsmen,

rapt

Upon the teeming harvest, should not dip
His hand into the bag: but well I know

That unto him who works, and feels he works,

This same grand year is ever at the doors."

He spoke; and, high above, I heard them blast

The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap

And buffet round the hills from bluff to bluff.

ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren

crag,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,

That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those

LOCKSLEY HALL.

That loved me, and alone; on shore, and
when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known: cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, govern-
ments,
Myself not least, but honor'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin
fades
Forever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on
life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard my-
self,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle —
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I
mine.
There lies the port: the vessel puffs her
sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mar-
iners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and
thought with me —
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads — you and I are
old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs,
the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my
friends,
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
Weare not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we
are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in
will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

LOCKSLEY HALL.

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 't is early morn;
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle horn.
'T is the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call;
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;
Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.
Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.
Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.
Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time;
When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed:
When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be. —
In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me;
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd — her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs —
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes —

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong";
Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?" weeping, "I have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copeses ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fullness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

Falsar than all fancy fathoms, falsar than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy? — having known me — to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is: thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought;
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand —
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool!

Well — 't is well that I should bluster! — Hadst thou less unworthy proved —
Would to God — for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?

LOCKSLEY HALL.

I remember one that perish'd : sweetly did she speak and move :
 Such a one do I remember, whom I loved to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and have not in the love she bore?
 No — she never loved me truly : love is love forevermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils ! this is truth the poet sings,
 That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
 In the dead unhappy night, when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the
 Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadow of the past and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
 To thy widow'd marriage pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whisper'd by the phantom years,
 And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears ;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.
 Turn thee, turn thee, on thy pillow : get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender voice will cry.
 'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival brings thee rest.
 Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.
 Half is thine and half is his : it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
 With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings — she herself was not exempt —
 Truly, she herself had suffer'd" — Perish in thy self-contempt !

Overlive it — lower yet — be happy ! wherefore should I care?
 I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?
 Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow.
 I have but an angry fancy : what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
 When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds are loud with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor feels,
 And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.
 Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age !

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
 When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life ;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,
 Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field.

And at night along the dusky highway near and near
 Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a day-dream.

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before he then,
 Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men ;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new :
 That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
 Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
 Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm ;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were fur'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd, ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint,
Science moves, but *slowly* slowly, creeping on from point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat forever like a boy's ?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn :

Shall I not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakened to be wroth with weakness ! woman's pleasure, woman's pain —
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,
Are as moonlight to sunlight, and as water unto wine —

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat ;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd : —
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit — there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breathings of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree —
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing-space ;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books —

Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but I *know* my words are wild,
But I count the *gray* barbarian lower than the Christian child.

*I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains !*

*Mated with a squalid savage — what to me were sun or clime ?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time —*

*I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon !*

*Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range.
Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change.*

*Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day :
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.*

*Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun :
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun —*

*O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.*

*Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall !
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.*

*Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath andholt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.*

*Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow ;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.*

GODIVA.

*I waited for the train at Coventry ;
I hung with grooms and porters on the
bridge,
To watch the three tall spires ; and there I
shaped*

The city's ancient legend into this : —

*Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people
well,*

*And loathed to see them overtax'd ; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought
Their children, clamoring, "If we pay, we
starve !"*

*She sought her lord, and found him, where
he strode*

*About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,
And pray'd him, "If they pay this tax, they
starve."*

*Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,
"You would not let your little finger ache
For such as these !" — "But I would die,"
said she.*

*He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul :
Then flip'd at the diamond in her ear ;
"O ay, ay, you talk !" — "Alas !" she
said,*

*"But prove me what it is I would not do."
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
He answer'd, "Ride you naked thro' the
town,*

*And I repeat it" ; and nodding, as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.*

*So left alone, the passions of her mind,
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
The hard condition ; but that she would loose
The people : therefore, as they loved her
well,*

*From then till noon no foot should pace the
street,*

*No eye look down, she passing ; but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window
barr'd.*

*Then fled she to her inmost bower, and
there*

*Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,
The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a breath
She finger'd, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook her head,
And shew'd the rippled ringlets to her
knee ;*

*Unclad herself in haste ; adown the stair
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd
The gateway ; there she found her palfrey
trapt*

In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

*Then she rode forth, clothed on with cha-
tity :*

*The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see : the barking cur
Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's footfall
shot*

*Light horrors thro' her pulses : the blind
walls*

Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead

Fantastic gables, crowding, stared : but she
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the
field

Gleam thro' the Gothic archways in the wall.
Then she rode back, clothed on with chas-
tity :

And one low churl, compact of thankless
earth,

The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peep'd — but his eyes, before they had their
will,

Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who
wait

On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused :
And she, that knew not, pass'd : and all at
once,

With twelve great shocks of sound, the
shameless noon

Was clast'd and hammer'd from a hundred
towers,

One after one : but even then she gain'd
Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed and
crown'd,

To meet her lord, she took the tax away,
And built herself an everlasting name.

THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL small voice spake unto me,
"Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?"

Then to the still small voice I said :
"Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made."

To which the voice did urge reply :
"To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

"An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk : from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

"He dried his wings : like gauze they grew :
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew."

I said, "When first the world began,
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

"She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast."

Thereto the silent voice replied :
"Self-blinded are you by your pride :
Look up thro' night : the world is wide.

"This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

"Think you this mould of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres?"

It spake, moreover, in my mind :
"Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind.

Then did my response clearer fall :
"No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all."

To which he answer'd scoffingly :
"Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?

"Or will one beam be less intense,
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancell'd in the world of sense?"

I would have said, "Thou canst not know,"
But my full heart, that work'd below,
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :
"Thou art so steep'd in misery,
Surely 't were better not to be.

"Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep :
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep."

I said, "The years with change advance :
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

"Some turn this sickness yet might take,
Ev'n yet." But he : "What drug can make
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?"

I wept, "Tho' I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ;

"And men, thro' novel spheres of thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not."

"Yet," said the secret voice, "some time
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

"Not less swift souls that yearn for light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

"Not less the bee would range her cells,
The fuzzy prickly fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

I said that "all the years invent ;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

"Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower
How grows the day of human power?"

"The highest-mounted mind," he said,
"Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.

'Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?

"Or make that morn, from his cold crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?

"Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.

"Thou hast not gained a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

"'T were better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

"Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind."

I said, "When I am gone away,
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,
Doing dishonor to my clay."

"This is more vile," he made reply,
"To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die.

"Sick art thou — a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

"Do men love thee? Art thou so bound
To men, that how thy name may sound
Will vex thee lying underground?

"The memory of the wither'd leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

"Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,
Hears little of the false or just."

"Hard task, to pluck resolve," I cried,
"From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride."

"Nay — rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warm'd me in the days
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

"When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

"I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear —

"Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life —

"Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and love —

"As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb about —

"To search thro' all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law:

"At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful I further thought and deed,

"To pass, when Life her light withdraws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause —

"In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honor'd, known,
And like a warrior overthrown;

"Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears:

"Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke,
And all the war is roll'd in smoke."

"Yea!" said the voice, "thy dream was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

"If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could . . . an hour?

"Then comes the check, the change, the fall.
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

"Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,
Link'd month to month with such a chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

"Thou hadst not between death and birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
So were thy labor little-worth.

"That men with knowledge merely play'd,
I told thee — hardly nigher made,
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade:

"Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to find,
That bears relation to the mind.

"For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

"Cry, faint not : either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

"Cry, faint not, climb : the summits slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

"Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

"I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

"If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

"And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

"Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl !
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?
There is one remedy for all."

"O dull, one-sided voice," said I,
"Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die ?

"I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

"I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

"Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream ;

"But heard, by secret transport led,
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head —

"Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

"He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised with
stones :

"But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face."

The sullen answer slid betwixt :
"Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,
The elements were kindlier mix'd."

I said, "I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

"And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new :

"Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence :

"For I go, weak from suffering here ;
Naked I go, and void of cheer :
What is it that I may not fear ?

"Consider well," the voice replied,
"His face, that two hours since hath died :
Wilt thou find passion, pain, or pride ?

"Will he obey when one commands ?
Or answer should one press his hands ?
He answers not, nor understands.

"His palms are folded on his breast :
There is no other thing express'd
But long disquiet merged in rest.

"His lips are very mild and meek :
Tho' one should smite him on the cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

"His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonor to her race —

"His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honor, some to shame, —
But he is chill to praise or blame.

"He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.

"High up the vapors fold and swim :
About him broods the twilight dim :
The place he knew forgetteth him."

"If all be dark, vague voice," I said,
"These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

"The sap dries up : the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death ? the outward signs ?

"I found him when my years were few :
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

"From grave to grave the shadow crept :
In her still place the morning wept :
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

"The simple senses crown'd his head :
'Omega ! thou art Lord,' they said,
'We find no motion in the dead.'

"Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,
Not make him sure that he shall cease ?

"Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense?"

"He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

"Here sits he shaping wings to fly:
His heart forebodes a mystery;
He names the name Eternity.

"That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.

"He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
And thro' thick veils to apprehend
A labor working to an end.

"The end and the beginning vex
His reason; many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counter-checks.

"He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something good,
He may not do the thing he would.

"Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half-shown, are broken and withdrawn.

"Ah! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt.

"But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

"The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve."

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced:

"Where wert thou when thy father play'd
In his free field, and pastime made,
A merry boy in sun and shade?"

"A merry boy they called him then.
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

"Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man:

"Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,
Whose troubles number with his days:

"A life of nothings, nothing-worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth!"

"These words," I said, "are like the rest,
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast:

"But if I grant, thou might'st defend
The thesis which thy words intend—
That to begin implies to end;

"Yet how should I for certain hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould?"

"I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

"It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

"As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping thro' from state to state.

"As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

"So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch.

"But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

"Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of night.

"Or if thro' lower lives I came—
Tho' all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame—

"I might forget my weaker lot;
For is not our first year forgot?
The haunts of memory echo not.

"And men, whose reason long was blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

"Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory:

"For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime?

"Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

"Of something felt, like something here;
Of something done, I know not where;
Such as no language may declare."

The still voice laugh'd. "I talk," said he,
 "Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
 Thy pain is a reality."

"But thou," said I, "hast miss'd thy mark,
 Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,
 By making all the horizon dark."

"Why not set forth, if I should do
 This rashness, that which might ensue
 With this old soul in organs new?"

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
 No life that breathes with human breath
 Has ever truly long'd for death."

"'T is life, whereof our nerves are scant,
 O life, not death, for which we pant;
 More life, and fuller, that I want."

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
 Then said the voice, in quiet scorn :
 "Behold, it is the Sabbath morn."

And I arose, and I released
 The casement, and the light increased
 With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,
 When meres begin to uncongeal,
 The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest :
 Passing the place where each must rest,
 Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,
 With measur'd footfall firm and mild,
 And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
 Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,
 Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
 The little maiden walk'd demure,
 Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,
 My frozen heart began to beat,
 Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on :
 I spoke, but answer came there none :
 The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
 A little whisper silver-clear,
 A murmur, "Be of better cheer."

As from some blissful neighborhood,
 A notice faintly understood,
 "I see the end, and know the good."

A little hint to so'ace woe,
 A hint, a whisper breathing low,
 "I may not speak of what I know."

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
 No certain air, but overtakes
 Far thought with music that it makes :

Such seem'd the whisper at my side :
 "What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?" I
 cried.

"A hidden hope," the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
 From out my sullen heart a power
 Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
 That every cloud, that spreads above
 And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
 And Nature's living motion lent
 The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
 The slow result of winter-showers :
 You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder'd, while I pace along :
 The woods were fill'd so full with song,
 There seem'd no room for sense of wrong.

So variously seem'd all things wrought,
 I marvel'd how the mind was brought
 To anchor by one gloomy thought :

And wherefore rather I made choice
 To commune with that barren voice,
 Than him that said, "Rejoice ! rejoice !"

THE DAY-DREAM.

PROLOGUE.

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :
 A pleasant hour has past away
 While, dreaming on your damask cheek,
 The dewy sister-eyelids lay.
 As by the lattice you reclined,
 I went thro' many wayward moods
 To see you dreaming — and, behind,
 A summer crisp with shining woods.
 And I too dream'd, until at last
 Across my fancy, brooding warm,
 The reflex of a legend past,
 And loosely settled into form.
 And would you have the thought I had,
 And see the vision that I saw,
 Then take the broidery-frame, and add
 A crimson to the quaint Macaw,
 And I will tell it. Turn your face,
 Nor look with that too-earnest eye —
 The rhymes are dazzled from their place,
 And order'd words asunder fly.

THE SLEEPING PALACE.

I.

The varying year with blade and sheaf
 Clothes and re-clothes the happy plains :

Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapors lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns,
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs:
In these, in those the life is stay'd,
The mantles from the golden eggs
Droop sleepily, and life is made,
Not even of a green that sings.
More like a picture on the wall
Than those old portraits of the kings,
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

Here sits the butler with a flask
Between his knees half-drain'd; and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid-of-honor blooming fair:
The page has caught her hand in his:
Her lips are sever'd as to speak:
His own are pout'd to a kiss:
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams, that through the oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gather'd in a ring,
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
And grapes with bunches red as blood;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, bur and brake and brier,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up the topmost palace-spire.

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of men?
Here all things in their place remain,
As all were order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
And bring the fated Fair Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

Year after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purpled coverlet,
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
And moves not on the rounded curl.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever: and, amid
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,
Glow forth each softly-shadowed arm
With bracelets of the diamond bright:
Her constant beauty doth inform
Stillness with love, and day with light.

She sleeps: her breathings are not heard
In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stir'd
That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps: on either hand upwell
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest:
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL.

All precious things, discover'd late,
To those that seek them issue forth;
For love in sequel works with fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth.
He travels far from other skies—
His mantle glitters on the rocks—
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter-footed than the fox.

The bodies and the bones of those
That strove in other days to pass,
Are wither'd in the thorny close,
Or scattered blanching on the grass.
He gazes on the silent dead
"They perish'd in their daring deeds."
This proverb flashes thro' his head,
"The many fail: the one succeeds."

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks:
He breaks the hedge: he enters there:
The color flies into his cheeks:
He trusts to light on something fair;
For all his life the charm did talk
About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
And whisper'd voices at his ear.

More close and close his footsteps wind;
The Magic Music in his heart

Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
He stoops — to kiss her — on his knee.
"Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
How dark those hidden eyes must be!"

THE REVIVAL.

1.

A touch, a kiss! the charm was snapt.
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

2.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,
The maid and page renew'd their strife,
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd, and clackt,
And all the long-pent stream of life
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

3.

And last with these the king awoke,
And in his chair himself uprear'd,
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,
"By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? we have slept, my lords.
My beard has grown into my lap,"
The barons swore, with many words,
"I was but an after-dinner's nap."

4.

"Pardy," return'd the king, "but still
My joints are something stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mention'd half an hour ago?"
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
In courteous words return'd reply:
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE.

1.

And on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the old:
Across the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
And deep into the dying day
The happy princess follow'd him.

2.

"I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss";
"O wake forever, love," she hears,
"O love, 't was such as this and this."

And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

3.

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep!"
"O happy sleep, that lightly fled!"
"O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!"
"O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!"
And o'er them many a flowing range
Of vapor buoy'd the crescent-bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

4.

"A hundred summers I can it be?
And whither goest thou, tell me where?"
"O seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders there."
And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

MORAL.

1.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay
And if you find no moral there,
Go, look in any glass and say,
What moral is in being fair.
O, to what uses shall we put
The wildweed-flower that simply blows?
And is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?

2.

But any man that walks the mead,
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,
According as his humors lead,
A meaning suited to his mind.
And liberal applications lie
In Art like Nature, dearest friend;
So 't were to cramp its use, if I
Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOI.

1.

You shake your head. A random string
Your finer female sense offends.
Well — were it not a pleasant thing
To fall asleep with all one's friends;
To pass with all our social ties
To silence from the paths of men;
And every hundred years to rise
And learn the world, and sleep again;
To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
And wake on science grown to more,
On secrets of the brain the stars,
As wild as aught of fairy lore;
And all that else the years will show,
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
The vast Republics that may grow,
The Federations and the Powers;
Titanic forces taking birth
In diverse seasons, divers climes;

For we are Ancients of the earth,
And in the morning of the times.

2.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
Thro' sunny decades new and strange,
Or gay quinquennials would we reap
The flower and quintessence of change.

3.

Ah, yet would I — and would I might !
So much your eyes my fancy take —
Be still the first to leap to light
That I might kiss those eyes awake !
For, am I right or am I wrong,
To choose your own you did not care ;
You'd have *my* moral from the song,
And I will take my pleasure there :
And, am I right or am I wrong,
My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',
To search a meaning for the song,
Perforce will still revert to you ;
Nor finds a closer truth than this
All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,
And evermore a costly kiss
The prelude to some brighter world.

4.

For since the time when Adam first
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
And every bird of Eden burst
In carol, every bud to flower,
What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes ?
What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd ?
Where on the double rosebud droops
The fulness of the pensive mind ;
Which all too dearly self-involved,
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me ;
A sleep by kisses undissolved,
That lets thee neither hear nor see :
But break it. In the name of wife,
And in the rights that name may give,
Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take n. y. lay,
And, if you find a meaning there,
O whisper to your glass, and say,
" What wonder, if he thinks me fair ?"
What wonder I was all unwise,
To shape the song for your delight,
Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise,
That float thro' Heaven, and cannot light ?
Or old-world trains, upheld at court
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue —
But take it — earnest wed with sport,
And either sacred unto you.

AMPHION.

My father left a park to me,
But it is wild and barren,
A garden too with scarce a tree
And waster than a warren :

Yet say the neighbors when they call,
It is not bad but good land,
And in it is the germ of all
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great
In days of old Amphion,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
Nor cared for seed or scion !
And had I lived when song was great,
And legs of trees were limber,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
And fiddled in the timber !

'T is said he had a tuneful tongue,
Such happy intonation,
Wherever he sat down and sung
He left a small plantation ;
Wherever in a lonely grove
He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,
And, as tradition teaches,
Young ashes pirouetted down
Coquetting with young beeches ;
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
Ran forward to his rhyming,
And from the valleys underneath
Came little copes climbing.

The birch-tree swang her fragrant hair,
The bramble cast her berry,
The gin within the juniper
Began to make him merry,
The poplars, in long order due,
With cypress promenaded,
The shock-head willows two and two
By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shot alder from the wave,
Came yews, a dismal coterie ;
Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,
Poussetting with a sloe-tree :
Old elms came breaking from the vine,
The vine stream'd out to follow,
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
From many a cloudy hollow.

And was n't it a sight to see,
When, ere his song was ended,
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
The country-side descended ;
And shepherds from the mountain-eaves
Look'd down, half-pleased, half-frighten'd,
As dash'd about the drunken leaves
The random sunshine lighten'd !

O, nature first was fresh to men,
And wanton without measure ;
So youthful and so flexible then,
You moved her at your pleasure.
Twang out, my fiddle! shake the twigs !
And make her dance attendance ;
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set aprig,
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'T is vain ! in such a brassy age
I could not move a thistle :
The very sparrows in the hedge
Scarce answer to my whistle ;
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
With strumming and with scraping,
A jackass heehaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading :
O Lord ! — 't is in my neighbor's ground,
The modern Muses reading.
They read Botanic Treatises,
And Works on Gardening through there,
And Methods of transplanting trees,
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose
O'er books of travell'd seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbors clipt and cut,
And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor sappy ;
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
The spindlings look unhappy.
Better to me the meanest weed
That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,
And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil
To grow my own plantation.
I'll take the showers as they fall,
I will not vex my bosom ;
Enough if at the end of all
A little garden blossom.

ST. AGNES.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon :
My breath to heaven like vapor goes :
May my soul follow soon !
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord :
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soiled and dark,
To yonder shining ground ;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round ;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee ;

So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;
The flashes come and go ;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strews her lights below,
And deepens on and up ! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide —
A light upon the shining sea —
The Bridegroom with his bride !

SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel :
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favors fall !
For them I battle to the end,
To save from shame and thrall :
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine :
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill ;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns :
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;
I hear a voice, but none are there ;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chants resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark ;
I leap on board : no helmsman steers :
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light !
Three angels bear the holy Grail :

With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, spins from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY.

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town
Met me walking on yonder way,
"And have you lost your heart?" she said:
"And are you married yet, Edward Gray?"

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me:
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:
"Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray."

"Ellen Adair she loved me well,
Against her father's and mother's will:
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

"Shy she was, and I thought her cold;
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea;
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

"Cruel, cruel the words I said!
Cruelly came they back to-day:
'You're too slight and fickle,' I said,
'To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.'

"There I put my face in the grass—
Whisper'd, 'Listen to my despair:
I repent me of all I did:
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!'

"Then I took a pencil, and wrote
On the mossy stone, as I lay,
'Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;
And here the heart of Edward Gray!'

"Love may come, and love may go,
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree:
But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

"Bitterly wept I over the stone:
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:
There lies the body of Ellen Adair!
And there the heart of Edward Gray!"

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL
MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'T is five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port:
But let it not be such as this:
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,
To make me write my random rhymes,
Ere they be half-forgotten;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favor'd lips of mine;
Until the charm have power to make
New lifeblood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
And phantom hopes assemble;
And that child's heart within the man's
Begins to move and tremble.

LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

71

Thro' many an hour of summer suns
By many pleasant ways,
Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days :
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,
Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
For that which all deny them, —
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,
Tho' fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;
There must be stormy weather ;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ;
If old things, there are new :
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
Yet glimpses of the true.
Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is such in man and maid ;
With fair horizons bound !
This whole wide earth of light and shade
Comes out, a perfect round.
High over roaring Temple-bar,
And, set in Heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honor'd by the guest
Half-mused, or reeling-ripe,
The pint, you brought me, was the best
That ever came from pipe.
But tho' the port surpasses praise,
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
Is there some magic in the place ?
Or do my peptics differ ?

For since I came to live and learn,
No pint of white or red
Had ever half the power to turn
This wheel within my head,
Which bears a season'd brain about,
Unsubject to confusion,
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
With many kinsmen gay,
Where long and largely we carouse,
As who shall say me nay :

Each month, a birthday coming on,
We drink defying trouble,
Or sometimes two would meet in one,
And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
Had relish fiery-new,
Or, elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
As old as Waterloo ;
Or stow'd (when classic Canning died)
In musty bins and chambers,
Had cast upon its crusty side
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !
She answer'd to my call,
She changes with that mood or this,
Is all-in-all to all :
She lit the spark within my throat,
To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
The waiter's hands, that reach
To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.
He looks not like the common breed
That with the napkin dally ;
I think he came like Ganymede,
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
Than modern poultry drop,
Stept forward on a firmer leg,
And cramm'd a plumper crop :
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
Crow'd luster late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
Till in a court he saw
A something-pottle-bodied boy,
That knuckled at the taw.
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good
Flew over roof and casement :
His brothers of the weather stood
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorp, and spire,
And follow'd with acclaims,
A sign to many a staring shire,
Came crowing over Thames.
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
Till, where the street grows straiter,
One fix'd forever at the door,
And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go ?
How out of place she makes
The violet of a legend blow
Among the chops and steaks !
'Tis but a steward of the can,
One shade more plump than common ;
As just and mere a serving-man
As any, born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me down
 Into the common day ?
 Is it the weight of that half-crown,
 Which I shall have to pay ?
 For, something duller than at first,
 Nor wholly comfortable,
 I sit (my empty glass reversed),
 And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife,
 I take myself to task ;
 Lest of the fulness of my life
 I leave an empty flask :
 For I had hope, by something rare,
 To prove myself a poet ;
 But, while I plan and plan, my hair
 Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
 Till they be gather'd up ;
 The truth, that flies the flowing can,
 Will haunt the vacant cup :
 And others' follies teach us not,
 Nor much their wisdom teaches ;
 And most, of sterling worth, is what
 Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone !
 We know not what we know.
 But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone
 'Tis gone, and let it go.
 'T is gone : a thousand such have slept
 Away from my embraces,
 And fall'n into the dusty crypt
 Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went
 Long since, and came no more :
 With peals of genial clamor sent
 From many a tavern-door,
 With twisted quirks and happy hits,
 From misty men of letters ;
 The tavern-hours of mighty wits, —
 Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks
 Had yet their native glow ;
 Not yet the fear of little books
 Had made him talk for show ;
 But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,
 He flash'd his random speeches ;
 Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd
 His literary leeches.

So mix forever with the past,
 Like all good things on earth !
 For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,
 At half thy real worth ?
 I hold it good, good things should pass :
 With time I will not quarrel :
 It is but yonder empty glass
 That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
 To which I most resort,
 I too must part : I hold thee dear
 For this good pint of port.

For this, thou shalt from all things suck
 Marrow of mirth and laughter ;
 And, wheresoe'er thou move, good luck
 Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
 The sphere thy fate allots :
 Thy latter days increased with pence
 Go down among the pots :
 Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
 In haunts of hungry sinners,
 Old boxes, larded with the steam
 Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,
 Would quarrel with our lot :
 Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
 To serve the hot-and-hot ;
 To come and go, and come again,
 Returning like the pewit,
 And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
 That trifle with the cruel.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
 The thick-set hazel dies ;
 Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
 The corners of thine eyes :
 Live long, nor feel in head or chest
 Our changeful equinoxes,
 Till mellow Death, like some late guest,
 Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease
 To pace the gritted floor,
 And, laying down an unctuous lease
 Of life, shalt earn no more :
 No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,
 Shall show thee past to Heaven :
 But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,
 A pint-pot, neatly graven.

TO —,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.

"Cursed be he that moves my bones."
Shakespeare's Epitaph.

You might have won the Poet's name,
 If such be worth the winning now,
 And gain'd a laurel for your brow
 Of sounder leaf than I can claim ;

But you have made the wiser choice,
 A life that moves to gracious ends
 Thro' troops of unrecording friends,
 A deedful life, a silent voice :

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom
 Of those that wear the Poet's crown :
 Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
 Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die
 Nor leave his music as of old,
 But round him ere he scarce be cold
 Begins the scandal and the cry :

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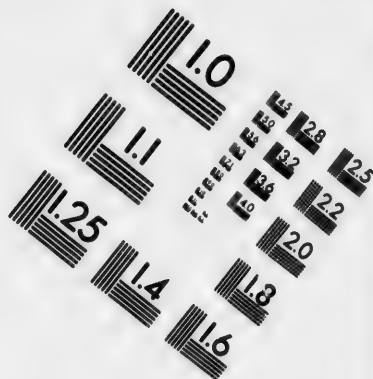
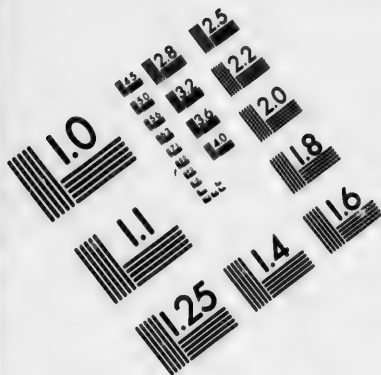
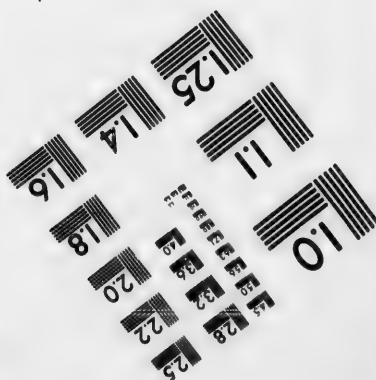
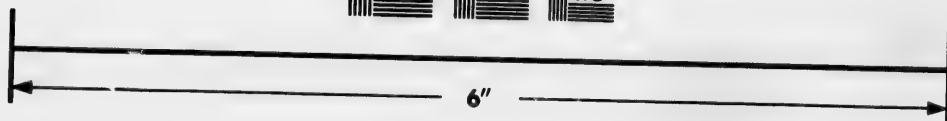
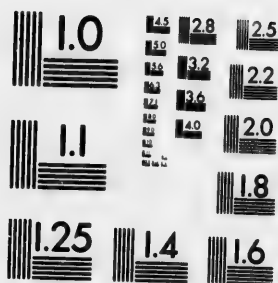


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"Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
To give his cousin, Lady Clare."

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"Proclaim the faults he would not show:
Break lock and seal: betray the trust:
Keep nothing sacred: 'tis but just
The many-headed beast should know."

Ah shameless! for he did but sing
A song that pleased us from its worth;
No public life was his on earth,
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best:
His worst he kept, his best he gave.
My Shakespeare's curse on clown and
knave
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be
The little life of bank and brier,
The bird that pipes his lone desire
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
For whom the carion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd!

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE.

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls
Of water, sheets of summer glass,
The long divine Penefian pass,
The vast Akroeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
With such a pencil, such a pen,
You shadow forth to distant men,
I read and felt that I was there:

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
And track'd you still on classic ground,
I grew in gladness till I found
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
And glisten'd—here and there alone
The broad-limb'd Gods at random thrown
By fountain-urns;—and Naiads car'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
Of cavern pillars; on the swell
The silver lily heaved and fell;
And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks,
To him who sat upon the rocks,
And fluted to the morning sea.

LADY CLARE.

It was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn:
Lovers long-betroth'd were they:
They too will wed the morrow morn:
God's blessing on the day!

"He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair:
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, "Who was this that went from thee?"
"It was my cousin," said Lady Clare,
"To-morrow he weds with me."

"O God be thank'd!" said Alice the nurse,
"That all comes round so just and fair:
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are not the Lady Clare."

"Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my
nurse?"
Said Lady Clare, "that ye speak so wild?"
"As God's above," said Alice the nurse,
"I speak the truth: you are my child."

"The old Earl's daughter died at my breast;
I speak the truth, as I live by bread:
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead."

"Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother," she said, "if this be true,
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,
"But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,
When you are man and wife."

"If I'm a beggar born," she said,
"I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,
"But keep the secret all ye can."
She said "Not so; but I will know
If there be any faith in man."

"Nay now, what faith?" said Alice the nurse,
"The man will cleave unto his right."
"And he shall have it," the lady replied,
"Tho' I should die to-night."

"Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!
Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee."
"O mother, mother, mother," she said,
"So strange it seems to me."

"Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare:



She went by dale, and she went by down,
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower :
" O Lady Clare, you shame your worth !
Why come you drest like a village maid,
That are the flower of the earth ? "

" If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are :
I am a beggar born," she said,
" And not the Lady Clare."

" Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
" For I am yours in word and in deed.
Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
" Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up !
Her heart within her did not fail :
She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,
And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn :
He turn'd, and kiss'd her where she stood :
" If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, " the next in blood —

" If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, " the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare."

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

In her ear he whispers gayly,
" If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
And I think thou lov'st me well."
She replies, in accents fainter,
" There is none I love like thee."
He is but a landscape-painter,
And a village maiden she.
He to lips, that fondly falter,
Presses his without reproof :
Leads her to the village altar,
And they leave her father's roof.
" I can make no marriage present ;
Little can I give my wife.
Love will make our cottage pleasant,
And I love thee more than life."
They by parks and lodges going
See the lordly castles stand ;
Summer woods, about them blowing,
Made a murmur in the land.
From deep thought himself he rouses,
Says to her that loves him well,
" Let us see these handsome houses
Where the wealthy nobles dwell."
So she goes by him attended,
Hears him lovingly converse,

Sees whatever fair and splendid
Lay betwixt his home and hers ;
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
Parks and order'd gardens great,
Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state.
All he shows her makes him dearer :
Evermore she seems to gaze
On that cottage growing nearer,
Where they twain will spend their days.
O but she will love him truly !
He shall have a cheerful home ;
She will order all things duly,
When beneath his roof they come.
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
And beneath the gate she turns ;
Sees a mansion more majestic
Than all those she saw before :
Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.
And they speak in gentle murmur,
When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly,
" All of this is mine and thine."
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he.
All at once the color flushes
Her sweet face from brow to chin :
As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.
Then her countenance all over
Pale again as death did prove ;
But he clasp'd her like a lover,
And he cheer'd her soul with love.
So she strove against her weakness,
Tho' at times her spirits sank :
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
To all duties of her rank :
And a gentle consort made he,
And her gentle mind was such
That she grew a noble lady,
And the people loved her much.
But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
And perplex'd her, night and morn,
With the burden of an honor
Unto which she was not born.
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
As she murmur'd, " O, that he
Were once more that landscape-painter,
Which did win my heart from me !"
So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
Fading slowly from his side :
Three fair children first she bore him,
Then before her time she died.
Weeping, weeping late and early,
Walking up and pacing down,
Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
And he came to look upon her,
And he look'd at her and said,

Flow
Thy
No m
For

"Bring the dress and put it on her,
That she wore when she was wed."
Then her people, softly treading,
Bore to earth her body, drest
In the dress that she was wed in,
That her spirit might have rest.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sunlit fall of rain.

In crystal vapor everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And, far in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-trees gather'd green
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :
Sometimes the thrush whistled strong :
Sometimes the sparrow, wheel'd along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong :
By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode thro' the covert of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.
She seem'd a part of joyous Spring :
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before ;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern set ;
And fleetly now she skim'd the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to cery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid :
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd
The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips.

A FAREWELL.

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver :
No more by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet then a river :
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver ;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
Forever and forever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver ;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.

THE BEGGAR MAID.

HER arms across her breast she laid ;
She was more fair than words can say :
Barefooted came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stepped down,
To meet and greet her on her way ;
"It is no wonder," said the lords,
"She is more beautiful than day."

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen :
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been :
Cophetua sware a royal oath :
"This beggar maid shall be my queen !"

THE VISION OF SIN.

I.
I HAD a vision when the night was late :
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
He rode a horse with wings, that would have
flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise :
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips —
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and
capes —
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and
piles of grapes.

2.
Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground ;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
Wov'n in circles : they that heard it sigh'd,
Panted hand in hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones re-
plied ;
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;

Then the music touch'd the gates and died ;
Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale ;
Till thronging in and in, to where they
waited,

As 't were a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throbb'd and
palpitated ;

Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round :

Then they started from their places,
Moted with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew :
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

3.

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-
tract,

That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and, slowly draw-
ing near,

A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and
year,

Unheeded : and I thought I would have
spoken,
And warned that madman ere it grew too
late :

But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was
broken,
When that cold vapor touch'd the palace
gate,

And link'd again. I saw within my head
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death,
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

4.

"Wrinkled hostler, grim and thin !
Here is custom come your way ;
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

"Bitter barmaid, waning fast !
See that sheets are on my bed ;
What ! the flower of life is past :
It is long before you wed.

"Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath !
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

"I am old, but let me drink ;
Bring me spices, bring me wine ;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

"Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

"Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :
What care I for any name ?
What for order or degree ?

"Let me screw thee up a peg :
Let me loose thy tongue with wine :
Callest thou that thing a leg ?
Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

"Thou shalt not be saved by works :
Thou hast been a sinner too :
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you !

"Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn :
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

"We are men of ruin'd blood ;
Therefore comes it we are wise. *
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

"Name and fame ! to fly sublime
Through the courts, the camps, the schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Banded in the hands of fools.

"Friendship !—to be two in one —
Let the canting liar pack !
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

"Virtue !—to be good and just—
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

"O ! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

"Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn :
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

"Drink, and let the parties rave :
They are fill'd with idle spleen ;
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

"He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

"Fill the can, and fill the cup:
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

"Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gayly doth she tread;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

"No, I love not what is new;
She is of an ancient house:
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

"Let her go! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs:
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

"Drink to lofty hopes that cool —
Visions of a perfect State:
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

"Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

"Fear not thou to loose thy tongue;
Set thy hoary fancies free:
What is loathsome to the young
Savors well to thee and me.

"Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

"Tell me tales of thy first love —
April hopes, the fools of chance:
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

"Fill the can, and fill the cup:
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

"Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads:
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads!

"You are bones, and what of that?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modell'd on a skull.

"Death is king, and Vivat Rex!
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam — if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones.

"No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye — nor yet your lip:
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

"Lo! God's likeness — the ground-plan —
Neither modell'd, glazed, or framed:
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed!

"Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy Ignorance!
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

"Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near:
What! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

"Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curl'd;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

"Fill the cup, and fill the can!
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!
Dregs of life, and lees of man:
Yet we will not die forlorn."

5.

The voice grew faint: there came a further
change:

Once more uprose the mystic mountain-
range:

Below were men and horses pierced with
worms,

And slowly quickening into lower forms;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of
dross,

Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd with
moss.

Then some one spake: "Behold! it was a
crime

Of sense avenged by sense that wore with
time."

Another said: "The crime of sense became
The crime of malice, and is equal blame."

And one: "He had not wholly quench'd his
power;

A little grain of conscience made him sour."

At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, "Is there any hope?"

To which an answer peal'd from that high
land,

But in a tongue no man could understand;
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

COME not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
To trample round my fallen head,
And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst
not save.

There let the wind sweep and the plover cry;
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime
I care no longer, being all unblest;
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,
And I desire to rest.

Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I
lie:

Go by, go by.

THE EAGLE.

FRAGMENT.

He clasps the crag with hooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave
Yon orange sunset waning slow:
From fringes of the faded eve,
O, happy planet, eastward go:
Till over thy dark shoulder glow
Thy silver sister-world, and rise
To glass herself in dewy eyes
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, lightly borne,
Dip forward under starry light,
And move me to my marriage-morn,
And round again to happy night.

BREAK, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S SONG.

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He pass'd by the town and out of the street,
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down on his
beak,

And stared, with his foot on the prey,
And the nightingale thought, "I have sung
many songs,

But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away."

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THE PRINCESS: A MEDLEY.

TO

HENRY LUSHINGTON

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED BY HIS FRIEND

A. TENNYSON.

PROLOGUE.

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people: thither flock'd at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half
The neighboring borough with their Institute
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son, — the son
A Walter too, — with others of our set,
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the
house,
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than
their names,
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park.
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of
Time;

And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together: celts and calumets,
Claymore and snow-shoe, toys in lava, fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs
From the isles of palm: and higher on the
walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armor hung.

And "this," he said, "was Hugh's at
Agincoort;
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle
With all about him," — which he brought,
and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with
knights
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings
Who laid about them at their wills and died;
And mixt with these, a lady, one that arm'd
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the
gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her
walls.

"O miracle of women," said the book,
"O noble heart who, being strait-besieged

By this wild king to force her to his wish,
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's
death,

But now when all was lost or seem'd as lost —
Her stature more than mortal in the burst
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire —
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,
She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,
And some were whelm'd with missiles of the
wall,

And some were push'd with lances from the
rock,

And part were down'd within the whirling
brook:

O miracle of noble womanhood!"

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle;
And, I all rapt in this, "Come out," he said,
"To the Abbey: there is Aunt Elizabeth
And sister Lilia with the rest." We went
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)
Down thro' the park: strange was the sight
to me;

For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, sown
With happy faces and with holiday.

There moved the multitude, a thousand
heads;

The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font
of stone

And drew from butts of water on the -lope,
The fountain of the moment, playing now
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball
Danced like a wisp: and somewhat lower
down

A man with knobs and wires and vials fired
A cannon: Echo answer'd in her sleep
From hollow fields: and here were telescopes
For azure views; and there a group of girls
In circle waited, whom the electric shock
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter: round
the lake

A little clock-work steamer paddling plied
And shook the lilies: perch'd about the
knolls

A dozen angry models jetted steam:
A petty railway ran: a fire-balloon

Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves
 And dropt a fairy parachute and past:
 And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph
 They flashed a saucy message to and fro
 Between the mimic stations; so that sport
 Went hand in hand with Science; elsewhere
 Pure sport; a herd of boys with clamor
 bowl'd
 And stum'p'd the wicket; babies roll'd about
 Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men and
 maids
 Arranged a country dance, and flew thro'
 light
 And shadow, while the twangling violin
 Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead
 The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
 Made noise with bees and breeze from end to
 end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the
 time;
 And long we gazed, but satiated at length
 Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-
 clasp,
 Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,
 Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost they
 gave
 The park, the crowd, the house; but all
 within
 The sward was trim as any garden lawn:
 And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
 And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends
 From neighbor seats: and there was Ralph
 himself,

A broken statue propt against the wall,
 As gay as any. Lilia wild with sport,
 Half child, half woman as she was, had wound
 A scarf of orange round the stony helm,
 And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
 That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
 Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb a feast
 Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,
 And there we joined them: then the maiden
 Aunt

Took this fair day for text, and from it
 preach'd
 An universal culture for the crowd,
 And all things great; but we, unworthier,
 told

Of College: he had climb'd across the spikes,
 And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,
 And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs: and
 one

Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,
 But honeying at the whisper of a lord;
 And one the Master, as a rogue in grain
 Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads I
 saw

The feudal warrior lady-clad; which brought
 My book to mind: and opening this I read
 Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang
 With tilt and tourney; then the tale of her
 That drove her foes with slaughter from her
 walls,

And much I praised her nobleness, and
 "Where,"

Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay
 Beside him) "lives there such a woman
 now?"

Quick answer'd Lilia, "There are thou-
 sands now
 Such women, but convention beats them
 down;

It is but bringing up; no more than that:
 You men have done it: how I hate you all!
 Ah, were I something great! I wish I were
 Some mighty poetess, I would shame you
 then,

That love to keep us children! O I wish
 That I were some great Princess, I would
 build

Far off from men a college like a man's,
 And I would teach them all that men are
 taught:

We are twice as quick!" And here she
 shook aside
 The hand that play'd the patron with her
 curls.

And one said smiling, "Pretty were the
 sight
 If our old halls could change their sex, and
 flaunt

With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
 And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.
 I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,
 But move as rich as Emperor-moths or Ralph
 Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,
 If there were many Lillas in the brood,
 However deep you might embower the nest,
 Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sward
 She tap'd her tiny silken-sandal'd foot:
 "That's your light way: but I would make
 it death

For any male thing but to peep at us."
 Petulant she spoke, and at herself she
 laugh'd;

A rose-bud set with little wilful thorns,
 And sweet as English air could make her,
 she:

But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,
 And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateul
 Puss,"

And swore he long'd at College, only long'd,
 All else was well, for she-society.
 They boated and they cricketed; they talk'd
 At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;
 They lost their weeks; they vex'd the souls of
 deans;

They rode; they betted; made a hundred
 friends,

And caught the blossom of the flying terms,
 But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place.
 The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he
 spoke,

Part banter, part affection.

"True," she said,
 "We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd us
 much.

I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did."

She held it out; and as a parrot turns
 Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,

...a's head (she lay
...re such a woman

"There are thou-
...ention beats them

more than that :
...ow I hate you all !
...at ! I wish I were
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...ren ! O I wish
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" And here she
...the patron with her

" Pretty were the
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...dowagers for deans,
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...ner ; yet I fear,
...s in the brood,
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...this upon the sward
...andal'd foot :
...but I would make
...o peep at us."

...and at herself she
...wilful thorns,
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...of names upon her,
...and " ungrateful

...College, only long'd,
...-society.

...cketed ; they talk'd
...of politics ;
...they vex the souls of

... ; made a hundred
...of the flying terms,
...te of Vivian-place.

...Lilia. Thus he
...n.

" True," she said,
...yes, you miss'd us

...pon it you did."

...a parrot turns
...y loving eye,

And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart and not for harm,
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd
And wrung it. " Doubt my word again !"
he said.

" Come, listen ! here is proof that you were
miss'd :

We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read,
And there we took one tutor as to read :
The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and
square

Were out of season : never man, I think,
So moulder'd in a sinecure as he :
For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,
And our long walks were stript as bare as
brooms,

We did but talk you over, pledge you all
In wassail : often, like as many girls —
Sick for the hollies and the yews of home —
As many little trifling Lilies — play'd
Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,
And *what's my thought* and *when* and
where and *how*.

And often told a tale from mouth to mouth
As here at Christmas."

She remember'd that :
A pleasant game, she thought : she liked it
more

Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
But these — what kind of tales did men tell
men,

She wonder'd, by themselves ?

A half-disdain
Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips :
And Walter nodded at me ; " He began,
The rest would follow, each in turn ; and so
We forged a sevenfold story. Kind ? what
kind ?

Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,
Seven-headed monsters only made to kill
Time by the fire in winter."

" Kill him now,
The tyrant ! kill him in the summer too,"
Said Lilia ; " Why not now," the maiden
Aunt.

" Why not a summer's as a winter's tale ?
A tale for summer as befits the time,
And something it should be to suit the place,
Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
Grave, solemn !"

Walter warp'd his mouth at this
To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh'd
And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth
An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
Hid in the ruins ; till the maiden Aunt
(A little sense of wrong had touch'd her face
With color) turn'd to me with " As you will ;
Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will."

" Take Lilia, then, for heroine," clamor'd
he,

" And make her some great Princess, six feet
high,

Grand, epic, homicidal ; and be you
The Prince to win her !"

" Then follow me, the Prince,"
I answer'd, " each be hero in his turn !
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream. —

6

Heroic seems our Princess as required. —
But something made to suit with Time and
place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experi-
ments

For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt
them all —

This *were* a medley ! we should have him
back

Who told the ' Winter's tale ' to do it for us.
No matter : we will say whatever comes.
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad or a song
To give us breathing-space."

So I began,
And the rest follow'd ; and the women sang
Between the rougher voices of the men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind :
And here I give the story and the songs.

I.

A PRINCE I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.
Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grand sire burnt
Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,
Dying, that none of all our blood should know
The shadow from the substance, and that one
Should come to fight with shadows and to fall.

For so, my mother said, the story ran.
And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,
An old and strange affection of the house.
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven
knows what :

On a sudden in the midst of men and day,
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.

Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head
cane,
And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd " cata-
lepsy."

My mother pitying made a thousand prayers ;
My mother was as mild as any saint,
Half-canonical by all that look'd on her,
So gracious was her tact and tenderness ;
But my good father thought a king a king ;
He cared not for the affection of the house ;
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
To lash offence, and with long arms and
hands

Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the
mass

For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,
While life was yet in bud and blade, be-
troth'd

To one, a neighboring Princess : she to me
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
At eight years old ; and still from time to time

Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,
And of her brethren, youths of puissance;
And still I wore her picture by my heart,
And one dark tress; and all around them both
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about
their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should
wed,
My father sent ambassadors with furs
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought
back

A present, a great labor of the loom;
And therewithal an answer vague as wind:
Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts:
He said there was a compact; that was true:
But then she had a will; was he to blame?
And maiden fancies; loved to live alone
Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood
With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:
The first, a gentleman of broken means
(His father's fault) but given to starts and
bursts

Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
And almost my half-self, for still we moved
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's
face
Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,
Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,
Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and
rent

The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof
From skirt to skirt; and at the last he swore
That he would send a hundred thousand men,
And bring her in a whirlwind: then he chew'd
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd
his spleen,

Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke, "My father, let me go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a king,
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable:
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,
May rue the bargain made." And Florian
said:

"I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess; she, you
know,

Who wedded with a nobleman from thence:
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land:
Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean."
And Cyril whisper'd: "Take me with you
too."

Then laughing "what, if these weird seizures
come

Upon you in those lands, and no one near
To point you out the shadow from the truth!
Take me: I'll serve you better in a strait;
I grate on rusty hinges here"; but "No!"
Roar'd the rough king, "you shall not; we
ourselves

Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead
In iron gauntlets: break the council up."

But when the council broke, I rose and
past
Thro' the wild woods that hung about the
town:

Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness
out:

Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed
In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees:
What were those fancies? wherefore break
her troth?

Proud look'd the lip: but while I medi-
tated

A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the
shrieks

Of the wild woods together; and a Voice
Went with it, "Follow, follow, thou shalt
win."

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month
Became her golden shield, I stole from court
With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,
Cat-footed thro' the town and half in dread
To hear my father's clamor at our backs
With Ho! from some bay-window shake
the night:

But all was quiet: from the bastion'd walls
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,
And flying reach'd the frontier: then we
crost

To a livelier land; and so by tilth and grange,
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,
We gain'd the mother-city thick with towers,
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and small
his voice,

But bland the smile that like a wrinkling
wind

On glassy water drove his cheek in lines;
A little dry old man, without a star,
Not like a king: three days he fasted us,
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,
And my betroth'd. "You do us, Prince,"
he said,

Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,
"All honor. We remember love ourselves
In our sweet youth: there did a compact pass
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—
I think the year in which our olives fail'd.
I would you had her, Prince, with all my
heart,

With my full heart: but there were widows
here,

Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche;
They fed her theories, in and out of place
Maintaining that with equal husbandry
The woman were an equal to the man.
They harp'd on this; with this our banquets
rang:

Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk;
Nothing but this; my very ears were hot
To hear them: knowledge, so my daughter
held,

Was all in all; they had but been, she thought,

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ut been, she thought,

As children; they must lose the child, assume
The woman; then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,
Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
But all she is and does is awful: odes
About this losing of the child; and rhymes
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
Beyond all reason: these the women sang:
And they that know such things—I sought
but peace;

No critic I—would call them masterpieces;
They master'd me. At last she begg'd a boon
A certain summer-palace which I have
Hard by your father's frontier: I said no,
Yet being an easy man, gave it; and there,
All wild to found an University
For maidens, on the spur she fled; and more
We know not,—only this: they see no men,
Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon her
As on a kind of paragon; and I
(Pardon me saying it) were much loath to
breed

Dispute betwixt myself and mine: but since
And I confess with right) you think me bound
In some sort, I can give you letters to her:
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance
Almost at naked nothing."

Thus the king;
And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)
Went forth again with both my friends. We
rode

Many a long league back to the North. At last
From hills, that look'd across a land of hope,
We dropt with evening on a rustic town
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,
Close at the boundary of the liberties:
There enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host
To council, plied him with his richest wines,
And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He with a long low sibilant, stared
As blank as death in marble; then exclaim'd
Availing it was clear against all rules
For any man to go: but as his brain
Began to mellow, "If the king," he said,
"Had given us letters, was he bound to
speak?

The king would bear him out"; and at the
last—

"The summer of the vine in all his veins—
No doubt that we might make it worth his
while.

She once had past that way; he heard her
speak;

She scared him; life! he never saw the like;
She look'd as grand as doomsday and as
grave:

And he, he revered his liege-lady there;
He always made a point to post with mares;
His daughter and his housemaid were the
boys:

The land he understood for miles about
Was till'd by women; all the swine were sows,
And all the dogs—"

But while he jested thus

A thought flash'd thro' me which I cloth'd
in act,

Remembering how we three presented Maid
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,
In masque or pageant at my father's court.
We sent mine host to purchase female gear;
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake
The midriff of despair with laughter, help
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes
We rustled: him we gave a costly bribe
To guard on silence, mounted our good steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,
And rode till midnight when the college lights
Began to glitter fire-like in copse
And linden alley: then we past an arch,
Whereon a woman-stature rose with wings
From four wing'd horses dark against the
stars;

And some inscription ran along the front,
But deep in shadow: further on we gain'd
A little street half garden and half house;
But scarce could hear each other speak for
noise

Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers
falling

On silver anvils, and the splash and stir
Of fountains spouting, and showering down
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose:
And all about us peal'd the nightingale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,
By two s; here lamps blazon'd like Heaven
and Earth

With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;
A plumed-arm'd Ostleress and a stable wench
Came running at the call, and help'd us down.

Then steep a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,
Full down, before us into rooms which gave
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel: her we ask'd of that and this,
And who were tutors. "Lady Blanche," she
said,

"And Lady Psyche." "Which was prettiest,
Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche." "Hers
are we,"

One voice, we cried; and I sat down and
wrote,

In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East:

"Three ladies of the Northern empire pray
Your Highness would enroll them with your
own,

As Lady Psyche's pupils."

This I seal'd:

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,
And raised the blinding bandage from his
eyes:

I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;
And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd
To sit about a glimmering night, and watch
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich,

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.

For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

II.

At break of day the College Portress came:
She brought us Academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold; and now when these
were on,

And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,
She, curtseying her obeisance, let us know
The Princess Ida waited: out we paced,
I first, and following thro' the porch that sang
All round with laurel, issued in a court
Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of
flowers.

The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst;
And here and there on lattice edges lay
Or book or lute; but hastily we past,
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,
With two tame leopards couch'd in deep her
throne,

All beauty compass'd in a female form,
The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,
Than our man's earth; such eyes were in
her head,

And so much grace and power, breathing
down

From over her arch'd brows, with every turn
Lived thro' her to the tips of her long hands,
And to her feet. She rose her height, and
said:

"We give you welcome: not without re-
doued

Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,
The first-fruits of the stranger: aftertime,
And that full voice which circles round the
grave,

Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.
What I are the ladies of your land so tall?"

"We of the court," said Cyril. "From the
court,"

She answer'd, "then ye know the Prince?"
and he:

"The climax of his age! as tho' there were
One rose in all the world, your Highness that,
He worships your ideal." She replied:

"We scarcely thought in our own hall to
hear

This barren verbiage, current among men,

Like coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.
Your flight from out your bookless wilds
would seem

As arguing love of knowledge and of power;
Your language proves you still the child.
Indeed,

We dream not of him: when we set out hand
To this great work, we purposed with our-
self

Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling
The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so,
Some future time, if so indeed you will,
You may with those self-styled our lords ally
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with
scale."

At those high words, we, conscious of our-
selves,

Perused the matting; then an officer
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these:
Not for three years to correspond with home;
Not for three years to cross the liberties;
Not for three years to speak with any men;
And many more, which hastily subscribed,
We enter'd on the boards: and "Now,"
she cried,

"Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look,
our hall!

Our statues! — not of those that men desire,
Sleek Odaliskes, or oracles of mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these and lose
Convention, since to look on noble forms
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism
That which is higher. O lift your natures
up:

Embrace our aims: work out your freedom.
Girls,

Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd:
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite
And slander, die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble. Leave us: you may go:
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
The fresh arrivals of the week before;
For they press in from all the provinces,
And fill the hive."

She spoke, and bowing waved
Dismissal: back again we crost the court
To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd in,
There sat along the forms, like morning doves
That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
A patient range of pupils; she herself
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,
And on the hither side, or so she look'd,
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,
In shining draperies, headed like a star,
Her maiden babe, a double April old,
Aglala slept. We sat: the Lady glanced:
Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame

That whisper'd "Asses' ears" among the
sedge,

"My sister." "Comely too by all that's
fair."

Said Cyril. "O hush, hush!" and she began.

"This world was once a fluid haze of light,
Till toward the centre set the starry tides,
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast
The planets: then the monster, then the man;
Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,
Raw from the prime, and crushing down his
mate;

As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here
Among the lowest."

A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious past;
Glanced at the legendary Amazon
As emblematic of a nobler age;

Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those
That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines
Of empire, and the woman's state in each,
How far from just; till, warming with her
theme,

She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique
And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet
With much contempt, and came to chivalry:
When some respect, however slight, was paid
To woman, superstition all awry:
However then commenced the dawn: a beam
Had slanted forward, falling in a land
Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,
Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert
None lordlier than themselves but that which
made

Woman and man. She had founded; they
must build.

Here might they learn whatever men were
taught:

Let them not fear: some said their heads
were less:

Some men's were small; not they the least
of men;

For often fitness compensated size:

Besides the brain was like the hand, and grew
With using; thence the man's, if more, was
more;

He took advantage of his strength to be
First in the field: some ages had been lost;

But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life
Was longer; and albeit their glorious names
Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth
The highest is the measure of the man,
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe.
But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so
With women: and in arts of government
Elizabeth and others; arts of war
The peasant Joan and others; arts of grace
Sappho and others vied with any man:
And, last not least, she who had left her
place,

And bow'd her state to them, that they might
grow

To use and power on this Oasis, lapt

In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight
Of ancient influence and scorn."

At last
She rose upon a wind of prophecy

Dilating on the future: "everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummets dropt for one to sound the
abyss

Of science, and the secrets of the mind:
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more:
And everywhere the broad and bounteous
Earth

Should bear a double growth of those rare
souls,

Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the
world."

She ended here, and beckon'd: "Thus: the rest
Parted; and, clapping full-fac'd, welcome, she
Began to address us, and was moving on
In gratulation, till as when a boat
Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her
voice

Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she
cried,

"My brother!" "Well, my sister." "O,"
she said,

"What do you here? and in this dress? and
these?"

Why who are these? a wolf within the fold!
A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious to
me!

A plot, a plot, a plot to ruin all!"

"No plot, no plot," he answer'd. "Wretch-
ed boy,

How saw you not the inscription on the gate,
LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH?"

"And if I had," he answer'd, "who could
think

The softer Adams of your Academe,
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such

As charnt on the blanching bones of men?"

"But you will find it otherwise," she said.
"You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools! my
vow

Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,
That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,
The Princess." "Well then, Psyche, take
my life,

And nail me like a weasel on a grange
For warning: bury me beside the gate,
And cut this epitaph above my bones;
Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
All for the common good of womankind."

"Let me die too," said Cyril, "having seen
And heard the Lady Psyche."

"Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the truth;
Receive it; and in me behold the Prince
Your countryman, affianced years ago
To the Lady Ida: here, for here she was,
And thus (what other way was left?) I came."

"O Sir, O Prince, I have no country; none;
If any, this; but none. What'er I was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.

Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may not breathe

Within this vestal limit, and how should I,
Who am not mine, say, live: the thunderbolt
Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak; it falls."

"Yet pause," I said: "for that inscription
there,

I think no more of deadly lurks therein,
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
To scare the fowl from fruit: if more there be,
If more and acted on, what follows? war:
Your own work marr'd: for this your Ac-
ademe,

Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass
With all fair theories only made to gild
A stormless summer." "Let the Princess
judge

Of that," she said: "farewell, Sir—and to
you.

I shudder at the sequel, but I go."

"Are you that Lady Psyche," I rejoin'd,
"The fifth in line from that old Florian,
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
As he bestrode my Grand sire, when he fell,
And all else fled: we point to it, and we
say,

The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,
But branches current yet in kindred veins."

"Are you that Psyche," Florian added, "she
With whom I sang about the morning hills,
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple
fly,

And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing
brow,

To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming
draught

Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read
My sickness down to happy dreams? are you
That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?
You were that Psyche, but what are you
now?"

"You are that Psyche," Cyril said, "for
whom

I would be that forever which I seem,
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,
And glean your scatter'd sapience."

Then once more,
"Are you that Lady Psyche," I began,
"That on her bridal morn before she past
From all her old companions, when the king
Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient
ties

Would still be dear beyond the southern
hills:

That were there any of our people there
In want or peril, there was one to hear
And help them: look! for such are these
and I."

"Are you that Psyche," Florian ask'd, "to
whom,

In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
Came flying while you sat beside the well?
The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,
And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and the
blood

Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.
That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you
wept.

O by the bright head of my little niece,
You were that Psyche, and what are you
now?"

"You are that Psyche," Cyril said again,
"The mother of the sweetest little maid,
That ever crow'd for kisses."

"Out upon it!"
She answer'd, "peace! and why should I not
play

The Spartan Mother with emotion, be
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
Him you call great: he for the common weal,
The fading politics of mortal Rome,
As I might slay this child, if good need were,
Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom
The secular emancipation turns
Of half this world, be swerved from right to
save

A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.
Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.
O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear
My conscience will not count me fleckless;
yet—

Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise
You perish) as you came to slip away,
To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be said,
These women were too barbarous, would not
learn;

They fled, who might have shamed us:
promise, all."

What could we else, we promised each;
and she,

Like some wild creature newly caged, com-
menced

A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian; holding out her lily arms
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said:
"I knew you at the first; tho' you have grown
You scarce have alter'd: I am sad and glad
To see you, Florian. I give thee to death,
My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.
Our mother, is she well?"

With that she kiss'd
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up
From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the
heart,
And far allusion, till the gracious dews
Began to glisten and to fall: and while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,
"I brought a message her: from Lady
Blanche."

Back started she, and turning round we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter where she
stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock.
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
That clad her like an April daffodil
(Her mother's color) with her lips apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,
As bottom agates seen to wave and float
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

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So stood that same fair creature at the door.
Then Lady Psyche, "Ah—Melissa— you!
You heard us?" and Melissa, "O pardon
me!

I heard, I could not help it, did not wish:
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,
Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,
To give three gallant gentlemen to death."
"I trust you," said the other, "for we tw
Were always friends, none closer, elm and
vine:

But yet your mother's jealous temperament—
Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or
prove

The Danaid of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose
My honor, these their lives." "Ah, fear me
not,"

Replied Melissa; "no—I would not tell,
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard
things

That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."
"Be it so," the other, "that we still may lead
The new light up, and culminate in peace,
For Solomon may come to Sheba yet."
Said Cyril, "Madam, he the wisest man
Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls
Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you
(Tho' Madam you should answer, we would
ask)

Less welcome find among us, if you came
Among us, debtors for our lives to you,
Myself for something more." He said not
what,

But "Thanks," she answer'd, "go: we have
been too long
Together: keep your hoods about the face:
They do so that affect abstraction here.
Speak little; mix not with the rest; and
hold

Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be well."

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,
And held her round the knees against his
waist,

And blew the swoll'n cheek of a trumpeter,
While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and
the child

Push'd her flat hand against his face and
laugh'd;

And thus our conference closed.
And then we strolled
For half the day thro' stately theatres
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we
heard

The grave Professor. On the lecture slate
The circle rounded under female hands
With flawless demonstration: follow'd then
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
With scraps of thunderous Epic lighted out
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long

That on the stretch'd forefinger of all time
Sparkle forever: then we dipt in all
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
The total chronicles of man, the mind,
The morals, something of the frame, the rock,

The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the
flower,

Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
And whatsoever can be taught and known;
Till like three horses that have broken
fence,

And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I
spoke:

"Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we."
"They hunt old trails," said Cyril, "very
well;

But when did woman ever yet invent?"
"Ungracious!" answer'd Florian, "have you
learnt

No more from Psyche's lecture, 'you that
talk'd

The trash that made me sick, and almost
sad?"

"O trash," he said, "but with a kernel in it.
Should I not call her wise, who made me
wise?"

And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash,
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,
And every Muse tumbled a science in.

A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,
And round these halls a thousand baby loves
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,

Whence follows many a vacant pang; but O
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,

The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too;
He cleft me thro' the stomach; and now
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase
The substance or the shadow? will it hold?

I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I
Flatter myself that always everywhere
I know the substance when I see it. Well,

Are castles shadows? Three of them? Is
she

The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,
Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd
coat?

For dear are those three castles to my wants,
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
And two dear things are one of double worth,

And much I might have said, but that my
zone

Unmann'd me: then the Doctors! O to
hear

The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty plants
Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,
To break my chain, to shake my mane: but
thou,

Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry!
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my
throat;

Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet
Star-sisters answering under crescent brows;
Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and
loose

A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,
Where they like swallows coming out of
time

Will wonder why they came; but hark the
bell
For dinner, let us go!"

And in we stream'd
Among the columns, pacing staid and still
By twos and threes, till all from end to end
With beauties every shade of brown and
fair,

In colors gayer than the morning mist,
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.
How might a man not wander from his wits
Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine
own

Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,
The second-sight of some Astræan age,
Sat compass'd with professors: they, the
while,

Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro:
A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost terms
Of art and science: Lady Blanche alone
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,
With all her Autumn tresses falsely brown,
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace
Concluded, and we sought the gardens: there
One walk'd reciting by herself, and one
In this hand held a volume as to read,
And smoothened a petted peacock down with
that:

Some to a low song car'd a shallop by,
Or under arches of the marble bridge
Hung, shadow'd from the heat: some hid
and sought

In the orange thickets: others tost a ball
Above the fountain-jets, and back again
With laughter: others lay about the lawns,
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their
May

Was passing: what was learning unto them?
They wish'd to marry; they could rule a
house;

Men hated learned women: but we three
Sat muffled like the Fates; and often came
Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
That harm'd not: then day droopt; the
chapel bells

Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt with
those

Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,
Before two streams of light from wall to wall,
While the great organ almost burst his pipes,
Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the
court

A long melodious thunder to the sound
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies.
The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven
A blessing on her labors for the world.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!

Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;

While my little one, while my pretty one,
sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,
sleep.

III.

MORN in the white wake of the morning
star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.
We rose, and each by other dress with care
Descended to the court that lay three parts
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were
touch'd
Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount,
and watch'd
Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble,
approach'd

Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes
The circled Iris of a night of tears;
"And fly," she cried, "O fly, while yet you
may!

My mother knows": and when I ask'd her
"how,"
"My fault," she wept, "my fault! and yet
not mine;

Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me.
My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night
To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
She says the Princess should have been the
Head,

Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms;
And so it was agreed when first they came;
But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,
And she the left, or not, or seldom used;
Hers more than half the students, all the
love.

And so last night she fell to canvass you:
"Her countrywomen! she did not envy
her.

Who ever saw such wild barbarians?
Girls? — more like men!" and at these words
the snake,

My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast;
And O, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek
Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye
To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd:
"O marvellously modest maiden, you!

Men! girls, like men! why, if they had been
men

You need not set your thoughts in rubric
thus
For wholesale comment." Pardon, I am
shamed

That I must needs repeat for my excuse
What looks so little graceful: "men" (for
still

My mother went revolving on the word)
"And so they are, — very like men indeed —

And with that woman closeted for hours !
Then came these dreadful words out one by one,
"Why - these - ~~are~~ - men" : I shudder'd :
"and you know it."
"O ask me nothing," I said : "And she knows too,
And she conceals it." So my mother clutch'd
The truth at once, but with no word from me ;
And now thus early risen she goes to inform
The Princess : Lady Psyche will be crush'd ;
But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly :
But heal me with your pardon ere you go."

"What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush?"
Said Cyril : "Pale one, blush again : than wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven."
He added, "lest some classic Angel speak
In scorn of us, 'they mounted, Ganymedes,
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn.'
But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us farther furlough" : and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought
He scarce would prosper. "Tell us," Florian ask'd,
"How grew this feud betwixt the right and left."

"O long ago," she said, "betwixt these two
Division smoulders hidden : 't is my mother,
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
Pent in a crevice : much I bear with her :
I never knew my father, but she says
(God help her) she was wedded to a fool ;
And still she rail'd against the state of things.
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
And from the Queen's decease she brought her up.
But when your sister came she won the heart
Of Ida : they were still together, grew
(For so they said themselves) inosculated ;
Consonant chords that shiver to one note ;
One mind in all things : yet my mother still
Affirms your Psyche thiefed her theories,
And angled with them for her pupil's love :
She calls her plagiarist ; I know not what :
But I must go : I dare not tarry," and light,
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian, gazing after her :
"An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.
If I could love, why this were she : how pretty
Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,
As if to close with Cyril's random wish :
Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring pride,
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow."

"The crane," I said, "may chatter of the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.

My princess, O my princess ! true she errs,
But in her own grand way : being herself
Three times more noble than three-score of men,
She sees herself in every woman else,
And so she wears her error like a crown
To blind the truth and me : for her, and her,
Hebe were they to hand ambrosia, mix
The nectar ; but - ah she - whene'er she moves
The Samian Herè rises and she speaks
A Memnon smitten with the morning Sun."

So saying, from the court we paced, and gain'd
The terrace ranged along the Northern front,
And leaning there on those balusters, high
Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale
That blown about the foliage underneath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came
Cyril, and yawning "O hard task," he cried :
"No fighting shadows here ! I forced a way
Thro' solid opposition crab'd and gnarl'd.
Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump
A league of street in summer solstice down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.
I knock'd and bidden, enter'd ; found her there

At point to move, and settled in her eyes
The green malignant light of coming storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,
As man's could be ; yet maiden-meek I pray'd
Concealment : she demanded who we were,
And why we came ? I fabled nothing fair,
But, your example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.

But when I dwelt upon your old affianced,
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,
And our three lives. True - we had limed ourselves,
With open eyes, and we must take the chance.
But such extremes, I told her, well might harm

The woman's cause. "Not more than now," she said,
"So puddled as it is with favoritism."
I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall

Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew :
Her answer was "Leave me to deal with that."

I spoke of war to come and many deaths,
And she replied, her duty was to speak,
And duty duty, clear of consequences.
I grew discouraged, Sir, but since I knew
No rock so hard but that a little wave
May beat admission in a thousand years,
I recommenced : "Decide not ere you pause.
I find you here but in the second place
Some say the third - the authentic foundress you.

I offer boldly : we will seat you highest :
Wink at our advent : help my prince to gain
His rightful bride, and here I promise you

Some palace in our land, where you shall reign

The head and heart of all our fair she-world,
And your great name flow on with broadening time

Forever." Well, she balanced this a little,
And told me she would answer us to-day,
Meantime be mute: thus much, nor more I gain'd."

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.
"That afternoon the Princess rode to take
The dip of certain strata to the North.
Would we go with her? we should find the land

Worth seeing; and the river made a fall
Out yonder"; then she pointed on to where
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro' all
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.
Then summon'd to the porch we went. She stood

Among her maidens, higher by the head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he roll'd
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near:
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came

Upon me, the weird vision of our house:
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,
Her college and her maidens, empty masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt
My heart beat thick with passion and with awe;

Then from my breast the involuntary sigh
Broke, as she smote me with the light of eyes

That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long retinue following up
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she said:
"O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not
Too harsh to your companion yester-morn;
Unwillingly we spake." "No — not to her,"
I answer'd, "but to one of whom we spake
Your Highness might have seem'd the thing
you say."

"Again?" she cried, "are you ambassador
from him to me? we give you, being strange,
A license: speak, and let the topic die."

I stammer'd that I knew him — could have
wish'd —

"Our king expects — was there no precontract?"

There is no truer-hearted — ah, you seem
All he prefigured, and he could not see
The bird of passage flying south but long'd
To follow: surely, if your Highness keep
Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to
death,

Or baser courses, children of despair."

"Poor boy," she said, "can he not read
— no books?"

Quoit, tennis, ball — no games? nor deals in
that

Which men delight in, martial exercise?

To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,

Metinks he seems no better than a girl;

As girls were once, as we ourself have
been:

We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with
them:

We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,
Being other — since we learnt our meaning
here,

To lift the woman's fall'n divinity,
Upon an even pedestal with man."

She paused, and added with a haughtier
smile:

"And as to precontracts, we move, my
friend,

At no man's beck, but know ourself and
thee,

O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out
She kept her state, and left the drunken king
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms."

"Alas your Highness breathes full East,"
I said,

"On that which leans to you. I know the
Prince,

I prize his truth: and then how vast a work
To assail this gray pre-eminence of man!

You grant me license; might I use it? think,
Ere half be done perchance your life may
fail;

Then comes the feeble heiress of your plan,
And takes and ruins all; and thus your pains
May only make that footprint upon sand
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice

Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that
you,

With only Fame for spouse and your great
deeds

For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,
Meanwhile, what every woman counts her
due,

Love, children, happiness?"

And she exclaim'd,
"Peace, you young savage of the Northern
wild!

What! tho' your Prince's love were like a
God's,

Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?

You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd to
thus:

Yet will we say for children, would they grew
Like field-flowers everywhere! we like them
well:

But children die; and let me tell you, girl,
Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die:

They with the sun and moon renew their
light

Forever, blessing those that look on them.

Children — that men may pluck them from
our hearts,

Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves —

O — children — there is nothing upon earth

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More miserable than she that has a son
And sees him err: nor would we work for
fame;

Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of
Great,
Who learns the one row sto whence after-
hands

May move the world, tho' she herself effect
But little: wherefore up and act, nor shrink
For fear our solid aim be dissipated
By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had
been,

In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
Of giants living, each, a thousand years,
That we might see our own work out, and
watch

The sandy footprint harden into stone."

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself
If that strange Poet-princess with her grand
Imaginations might at all be won.
And she broke out interpreting my thoughts:

"No doubt we seem a kind of monster to
you;

We are used to that: for women, up till this
Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle
taboo,

Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
How much their welfare is a passion to us.
If we could give them surer, quicker proof—
O if our end were less achievable

By slow approaches, than by single act
Of immolation, any phase of death,
We were as prompt to spring against the
pikes,

Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,
To compass our dear sisters' liberties."

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear;
And up we came to where the river sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black
blocks

A breath of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,
And danced the color, and, below, stuck out
The bones of some vast bulk that lived and
roar'd

Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,
"As these rude bones to us, are we to her
That will be." "Dare we dream of that," I
ask'd,

"Which wrought us, as the workman and his
work,
That practice betters?" "How," she cried,
"you love

The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
Of hemlock; or device; wrought to the life;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her:
For there are schools for all." "And yet," I
said,

"Methinks I have not found among them
all

One anatomic." "Nay, we thought of that,"
She answer'd, "but it pleased us not: in truth

We shudder but to dream our maids should
ape

Those monstrous males that carve the living
hound,

And cram him with the fragments of the
grave,

Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
And holy secrets of this microcosm,
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful
jest,

Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter
hangs:

Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,
Nor willing men should come among us,
learnt,

For many weary moons before we came,
This craft of healing. Were you sick, our-
self

Would tend upon you. To your question
now,

Which touches on the workman and his work.
Let there be light and there was light: 't is so:
For was, and is, and will be, are but is;
And all creation is one act at once,

The birth of light: but we that are not all,
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now
that,

And live, perforce, from thought to thought,
and make

One act a phantom of succession: thus
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow,
Time;

But in the shadow will we work, and mould
The woman to the fuller day."

She spake
And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came
On flowery levels underneath the crag,
Full of all beauty. "O how sweet," I said,
(For I was half-oblivious of my mask),
"To linger here with one that loved us."
"Yea,

She answer'd, "or with fair philosophies
That lift the fancy: for indeed these fields
Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,
Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw
The soft white vapor streak the crowned
towers

Built to the Sun": then, turning to her
maids,

"Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;
Lay out the viands." At the word, they raised
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought

With fair Corinna's triumph; here she stood,
Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,
The woman-conqueror: woman-conquer'd
there

The bearded Victor of ten-thousand hymns,
And all the men mourn'd at his side: but we
Set forth to climb: then, climbing, Cyril kept
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I

With mine affianced. Many a little hand
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set
In the dark crag: and then we turn'd, we
wound

About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,

Hammering and clinking, chattering stony
names
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and
tuff.

Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and
all

The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
dying.

O hark, O hark! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow forever and forever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,
dying.

IV.

"There sinks the nebulous star we call the
Sun,
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound,"
Said Ida: "let us down and rest": and we
Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,
By every coppice-feather'd chasm and cleft,
Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to where
below

No bigger than a glow-worm shone the tent
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean'd
on me,
Descending: once or twice she lent her hand,
And blissful palpitations in the blood,
Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,
There leaning deep in broider'd down we
sank
Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and gold.

Then she, "Let some one sing to us:
lightlier move
The minutes fledged with music": and a
maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp, and
sang.

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they
mean,

Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a
sail,
That brings our friends up from the under-
world,

Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer
dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering
square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others: deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more."

She ended with such passion that the tear,
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl
Lost in her bosom: but with some disdain
Answer'd the Princess: "If indeed there
haunt

About the moulder'd lodges of the Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears with
wool

And so pace by: but thine are fancies hatch'd
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,
But trim our sails, and let old by-gones be,
While down the streams that float us each
and all

To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,
Throne after throne, and molten on the waste
Becomes a cloud: for all things serve their
time

Toward that great year of equal mights and
rights.

Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end
Found golden: let the past be past; let be
Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the rough: kex
break

The starr'd mosaic, and the wild goat hang
Upon the shaft, and the wild fig-tree split
Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear
A trumpet in the distance pealing news
Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns
Above the unrisen morrow": then to me,
"Know you no song of your own land," she
said,

"Not such as moans about the retrospect,
But deals with the other distance and the
hues

Of promise; not a death's-head at the wine."

Then I remember'd one myself had made,
What time I watch'd the swallow winging
south

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From mine own land, part made long since,
and part
Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

"O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her what I tell to thee.

"O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest
each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

"O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow
and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

"O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

"Why lingereth she to clothe her heart
with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are
green?

"O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is
flown:
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South
But in the North long since my nest is made.

"O tell her, brief is life, but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

"O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make
her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee."

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with alien
lips,

And knew not what they meant; for still my
voice
Rang false: but smiling, "Not for thee," she
said,

"O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
Shall burst her veil: marsh-divers, rather,
maid,
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass: and this

A mere love-poem! O for such, my friend,
We hold them slight: they mind us of the
time

When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves
are men,

That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,
And dress the victim to the offering up,
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,
And play the slave to gain the tyrannu.

Poor soul! I had a mind of honor once;
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,

A rogue of canzonets and serenades.

I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.
So thy blaspheme the muse! but great is
song

Used to great ends: ourself have often tried
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dash'd
The passion of the prophets; for song
Is due unto freedom, force and growth
Of spirit, than to junketing and love.

Love is it? Would this same mock-love, and
this

Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and
sphered

Whole in ourselves and owed to none.
Enough!

But now to leaven play with profit, you,
Know you no song, the true growth of your
soil,

That gives the manners of your country-
women?"

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head
with eyes

Of shining expectation fixt on mine.

Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a
song,

Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd flask had
wrought,

Or master'd by the sense of sport, began
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,
I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and
shook;

The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows;

"Forbear," the Princess cried; "Forbear,
Sir," I;

And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and
love,

I smote him on the breast: he started up;

There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;

Melissa clamor'd, "Flee the death"; "To
horse."

Said Ida: "home! to horse!" and fled, as
flies

A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,
When some one batters at the dove-cote-
doors,

Disorderly the women. Alone I stood
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,

In the pavilion: there like parting hopes
I heard them passing from me: hoof by
hoof,

And every hoof a knell to my desires,
Clang'd on the bridge: and then another
shriek,

"The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the
Head!"

For blind with rage she miss'd the plank, and
roll'd

In the river. Out I sprang from glow to
gloom:

There shrou'd her white robe like a blos-
som'd branch

Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I gave,

No more: but woman-vested as I was
Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I caught
her; then
Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree
Was half-disrooted from his place and stoop'd
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and
caught,
And grasping down the boughs I gain'd the
shore.

There stood her maidens glimmering
group'd
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward
drew

My burthen from mine arms; they cried,
"She lives!"

They bore her back into the tent: but I,
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,
Nor found my friends; but push'd alone on
foot

(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)
Across the woods, and less from Indian craft
Than beslike instinct hivedward, found at
length

The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves
Of open-work in which the hunter rued
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the
gates.

A light space was left between the horns,
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with
pain,

Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,
And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue
to hue,

Now poring on the glow-worm, now the star,
I paced the terrace till the bear had wheel'd
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step
Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
Than female, moving thro' the uncertain
gloom,

Disturb'd me with the doubt "if this were
she,"

But it was Florian. "Hist, O hist," he said,
"They seek us: out so late is out of rules.
Moreover 'Seize the strangers' is the cry.
How came you here?" I told him: "I," said
he,

"Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, re-
turn'd,

Arriving all confused amon' the rest
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
And, couch'd behind a Judith, I saw each
The head of Holofernes peep'd out from
Girl after girl was call'd to trial: and
Disclaim'd all knowledge of what I had seen,
Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pill'd her
She, question'd if she knew the man, at first

Was silent; closer prest, denied it not
And then, demanded if her mother knew,
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied:
From whence the Royal mind, familiar with
her,
Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent
For Psyche, but she was not there; she
call'd
For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to
face;

And I slept out: but whither will you now?
And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are fled:
What, if together? that were not so well.
Would rather we had never come! I dread
His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him more
than I

That struck him: this is proper to the clown,
Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the
clown,

To harm the thing that trusts him, and to
shame

That which he says he loves: for Cyril,
howe'er

He deal in frolic, as to-night — the song
Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser
lips

Beyond all pardon — as it is, I hold
These flashes on the surface are not he.
He has a solid base of temperament:
But as the water-lily starts and slides
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he."

Scarce had I ceased when from a tamarisk
near

Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,
"Names,"

He, standing still, was clutch'd; but I began
To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind
And double in and out the boles, and race
By all the fountains: fleet I was of fates:
Before me shower'd the rose in flakes; be-
hind

I heard the puff'd pursuer: at mine ear
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,
And secret laughter tickled all my soul.
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,
That clasp'd the feet of a Mnemosyne,
And falling on my face was caught and
known.

They haled us to the Princess where she
sat

High in the hall: above her droop'd a lamp,
And made the single jewel on her brow
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,
Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each side
Bow'd toward her, combing out her long
black hair

Damp from the river; and close behind her
stood

Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than
men

Huge women blowz'd with health, and wind,
and rain,

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her mother knew,
I not, or denied:
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gh, stronger than

health, and wind,

And labor. Each was like a Druid rock;
Or like a spire of land that stands apart
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with
mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove
An advent to the throne; and there-beside,
Half-naked, as if caught at once from bed
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay
The lily-shining child; and on the left,
Bow'd on her palms and folded up from
wrong,

Her round white shoulder shaken with her
sobs,

Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche erect
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

"It was not thus, O Princess, in old days:
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips:
I led you then to all the Castalies;
I fed you with the milk of every Muse;
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me
Your second mother: those were gracious
times.

Then came your new friend: you began to
change—

I saw it and grieved—to slacken and to cool;
Till taken with her seeming openness
You turned your warmer currents all to her,

To me you froze: this was my meed for all.
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,
And partly that I hoped to win you back,

And partly conscious of my own deserts,
And partly that you were my civil head,
And chiefly you were born for something
great,

In which I might your fellow-worker be,
When time should serve; and thus a noble
scheme

Grew up from seed we too long since had
sown;

In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
Up in one night and due to sudden sun:
We took this palace; but even from the first
You stood in your own light and darken'd
mine.

What student came but that you planed her
path

To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
I your old friend and tried, she new in all?
But still her lists were swell'd and mine were
lean;

Yet I bore up in hope she would be known:
Then came these wolves: they knew her:
they endured,

Long-closeted with her the yester-morn,
To tell her what they were, and she to hear:
And me none told: not less to an eye like
mine,

A lidless watcher of the public weal,
Last night, their mask was patent, and my
foot

Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd
To meet a cold 'We thank you, we shall
hear of it

From Lady Psyche: you had gone to her,
She told, perforce; and winning easy grace,

No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among
us

In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
Less grain than touchwood, while my honest
heat

Were all miscounted as malignant haste
To push my rival out of place and power.
But public use required she should be
known;

And since my oath was ta'en for public use,
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them
well,

Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;
And yet this day (tho' you should hate me
for it)

I came to tell you: found that you had gone,
Rid'n to the hills, she likewise: now, I
thought,

That surely she will speak; if not, then I:
Did she? These monsters blazon'd what
they were,

According to the coarseness of their kind,
For thus I hear; and known at last (my
work)

And full of cowardice and guilty shame,
I grant in her some sense of shame, she
flies;

And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
I, that have lent my life to build up yours,
I that have wasted here health, wealth, and
time,

And talents, I—you know it—I will not
boast:

Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
For every gust of chance, and men will say
We did not know the real light, but chased
The wisp that flickers where no foot can
tread."

She ceased: the Princess answer'd coldly
"Good:

Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)
Our mind is changed: we take it to our-
self."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,
And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.
"The plan was mine. I built the nest,"
she said,

"To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!" and stoop'd
to updrag

Melissa: she, half on her mother foot,
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and
cast

A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,
A Niobean daughter, one arm out,
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven: and while
We gazed upon her came a little stir

About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and
wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell

Delivering seal'd despatches which the Head
Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
Regarding, while she read, till over brow
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful
bloom

As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
When the wild peasant rights himself, the
rick

Flames, and his anger reddens in the heav-
ens;

For anger most it seem'd, while now her
breast,

Beaten with some great passion at her heart,
Palpitared, her hand shook, and we heard
In the dead hush the papers that she held
Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her feet
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she
crush'd

The scrolls together, made a sudden turn
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say
"Read," and I read — two letters — one her
sire's.

"Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince
your way

We knew not your ungracious laws, which
learn'd,

We, conscious of what temper you are built,
Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell
Into his father's hands, who has this night,
You lying close upon his territory,
Slept round and in the dark invested you,
And here he keeps me hostage for his son."

The second was my father's, running thus:
"You have our son: touch not a hair of his
head:

Render him up unscathed: give him your
hand:

Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed we hear
You hold the woman is the better man;
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
Would make all women kick against their
lords

Thro' all the world, and which might well
deserve

That we this night should pluck your palace
down:

And we will do it, unless you send us back
Our son, on the instant, whole."

So far I read;
And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

"O not to pry and peer on your reserve,
But led by golden wishes, and a hope
The child of regal compact, did I break
Your precinct: not a scorner of your sex
But venerator, zealous it should be
All that it might be; hear me, for I bear,
Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er your wrongs,
From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life
Less mine than yours: my nurse would tell
me of you;

I fabled for you, as babies for the moon,
Vague brightness; when a boy, you stoop'd
to me

From all high places, lived in all fair lights,
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south
And blown to inmost north; at eve and dawn
With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;

The leader wildswan in among the stars
Would cang it, and lapt in wreaths of glow-
worm light

The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,
Because I would have reach'd you, had you
been

Sphered up with Cassiopæia, or the enthroned
Persephone in Hades, now at length,

Those winters of abeyance all worn out,
A man I came to see you: but, indeed,

Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,
O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait

On you, their centre: let me say but this,
That many a famous man and woman, town

And landskip, have I heard of, after seen
The dwarfs of prestige; tho' when known,
there grew

Another kind of beauty in detail
Made them worth knowing; but in you I
found

My boyish dream involved and dazzled down
And master'd, while that after-beauty makes

Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,
Within me, that except you slay me here,

According to your bitter statute-book,
I cannot cease to follow you, as they say

The seal does music; who desire you more
Than growing boys their manhood; dying

lips,
With many thousand matters left to do,

The breath of life; O more than poor men
wealth,

Than sick men health, — yours, yours, not
mine, — but half

Without you, with you, whole; and of those
halves

You worthiest; and howe'er you block and
bar

Your heart with system out from mine, I hold
That it becomes no man to nurse despair,

But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms
To follow up the worthiest till he die:

Yet that I came not all unauthorized
Behold your father's letter."

On one knee
Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and
dash'd

Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce
Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,

As waits a river level with the dam
Ready to burst and flood the world with foam;

And so she would have spoken, but there rose
A hubbub in the court of half the maids

Gather'd together: from the illumined hall
Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a press

Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
And rainbow robes, and gems and gem-like

eyes,
And gold and golden heads; they to and fro

Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red,
some pale,

All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,
Some crying there was an army in the land,

And some that men were in the very walls,

lived in all fair lights,
rapt from inmost south
north; at eve and dawn
ang the woods;
in among the stars
pt in wreaths of glow-

murmur'd Ida. Now,
reach'd you, had you

opëia, or the enthroned
now at length,
ance all worn out,
ou: but, indeed,
an I lend full tongue,
thoughts that wait
let me say but this,
an and woman, town
heard of, after seen
e; tho' when known,

y in detail
owing; but in you I

ved and dazzled down
at after-beauty makes
act, from hour to hour,
you slay me here,
r statute-book,
you, as they say
who desire you more
their manhood; dying

atters left to do,
more than poor men

—yours, yours, not
whole; and of those

ve'er you block and

but from mine, I hold
to nurse despair,
h'd antagonisms
est till he die:
unauthorized
er."

On one knee
ch she caught, and

tide of fierce
behind her lips,
h the dam

the world with foam;
oken, but there rose
half the maids

the illumined hall
anted o'er a press
k as herded ewes,
gems and gem-like

ds; they to and fro
storm, some red,

ing to the light,
army in the land,
in the very walls,

And some they cared not; till a clamor grew
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
And worse confounded: high above them stood
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head: but ris-
ing up
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so
To the open window moved, remaining there
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
Glared ruin, and the wild birds on the light
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her
arms and call'd
Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

"What fear ye brawlers? am not I your
Head?
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks: I
dare
All these male thunderbolts: what is it ye
fear?
Peace! there are those to avenge us and
they come:

If not,—myself were like enough, O girls,
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
Die: yet I blame ye not so much for fear;
Six thousand years of fear have made ye that
From which I would redeem ye: but for
those

That stir this hubbub—you and you—I
know
Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow
morn

We hold a great convention: then shall they
That love their voices more than duty, learn
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to
live

No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,
Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,
The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of
Time,

Whose brains are in their hands and in their
heels,
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,
Forever slaves at home and fools abroad."

She, ending, waved her hands: thereat
the crowd
Muttering dissolved: then with a smile, that
look'd

A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,
When all the glens are drown'd in azure
gloom

Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said:

"You have done well and like a gentleman,
And like a prince: you have our thanks for all:
And you look well too in your woman's dress:
Well have you done and like a gentleman.
You saved our life: we owe you bitter thanks:
Better have died and spilt our bones in the
flood—

Then men had said—but now—What hin-
ders me

To take such bloody vengeance on you
both?—

Yet since our father—Wasps in our good
hive,

You would-be quenchers of the light to be,
Barbarians, grosser than your native bears—
O would I had his sceptre for one hour!
You that have dared to break our bound, and
gull'd

Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted
us—

I wed with thee! I bound by precontract
Your bride, your bonds slave! not tho' all the
gold

That veins the world were pack'd to make
your crown,

And every spoken tongue should lord you.
Sir,

Yotr falsehood and yourself are hateful to us:
I trample on your offers and on you:
Begone: we will not look upon you more.
Here, push them out at gates."

In wrath she spake.
Then those eight mighty daughters of the
plough

Bent their broad faces toward us and ad-
dress'd

Their motion: twice I sought to plead my
cause,

But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,
The weight of destiny: so from her face
They push'd us, down the steps, and thro'
the court,

And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty
mound

Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and
heard

The voices murmuring. While I listen'd,
came

On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt:
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts:
The Princess with her monstrous woman-
guard,

The just and earnest working side by side,
The cataract and the tumult and the kings
Were shadows; and the long fantastic night
With all its doings had and had not been,
And all things were and were not.

This went by
As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy;

Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts
And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one
To whom the touch of all mischance but came
As night to him that sitting on a hill
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun
Set into sunrise: then we moved away.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
That beat to battle where he stands;

Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands:

A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee;

The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilla sang : we thought her half-possess'd,
She struck such warbling fury thro' the words;
And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd
The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime—
Like one that wishes at a dance to change
The music—clapt her hands and cried for war,

Or some grand fight to kill and make an end :
And he that next inherited the tale
Half turning to the broken statue said,
"Sir Ralph has got your colors : if I prove
Your knight, and fight your battle, what for me?"

It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb
Lay by her like a model of her hand.
She took it and she flung it. "Fight," she said,

"And make us all we would be, great and good."

He knucklelike in his cap instead of casque,
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,
Arranged the favor, and assumed the Prince.

V.

Now, scarce three paces measured from the mound,

We stumbled on a stationary voice,
And "Stand, who goes?" "Two from the palace," I.

"The second two : they wait," he said,
"pass on ;

His Highness wakes" : and one, that clash'd
in arms,

By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas, led
Threading the soldier-city, till we heard
The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent
Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light
Dazed me half-blind : I stood and seem'd to hear,

As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes
A hisping of the innumerable leaf and dies,
Each hissing in his neighbor's ear ; and then
A strangled titter, out of which there brake
On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,
Unmeasured mirth ; while now the two old kings

Began to wag their baldness up and down,
The fresh young captains flash'd their glittering teeth,

The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved and blew,
And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet
with tears,

Panted from weary sides, "King, you are free!
We did but keep you surety for our son,
If this be he,—or a dragged mawkin, thou,
That tends her bristled grunterns in the sludge?"

For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with briars,

More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,
And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to heel.

Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm
A whisper'd jest to some one near him

"Look,
He has been among his shadows." "Satah take

The old women and their shadows ! (thus the King

Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with men.

Go : Cyril told us all."

As boys that slink
From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
Away we stole, and transient in a trice
From what was left of faded woman-slough
To sheathing splendors and the golden scale
Of harness, issued in the sun, that now
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,
And hit the northern hills. Here Cyril met us,
A little shy at first, but by and by
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given

For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, where-on

Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away
Thro' the dark land, and later in the night
Had come on Psyche weeping : "then we fell
Into your father's hand, and there she lies,
But will not speak, nor stir."

He show'd a tent
A stone-shot off : we enter'd in, and there
Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,
Pitiful sight, wrapt in a soldier's cloak,
Like some sweet sculpture draped from head
to foot,

And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,
All her fair length upon the ground she lay :
And at her head a follower of the camp,
A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and "Come," he
whisper'd to her,

"Lift up your head, sweet sister : lie not thus.
What have you done but right? you could
not slay

Me, nor your prince : look up : be comforted :
Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,
When fall'n in darker ways." And likewise I :
"Be comforted : have I not lost her too,

In whose least act abides the nameless charm
That none has else for me?" She heard,
she moved,

She moan'd, a folded voice ; and up she sat,
And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth

As those that mourn half-shrouded over death

In deathless marble. "Her," she said, "my friend—

Parted from her—betray'd her cause and mine—

Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not your faith?

O base and bad ! what comfort? none for me !"

To whom remorseful Cyril, "Yet I pray
Take comfort : live, dear lady, for your child !"
At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

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ty, for your child!"

voice and cried.

"Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah my
child,
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no
more!

For now will cruel Ida keep her back;
And either she will die from want of care,
Or sicken with ill usage, when they say
The child is hers—for every little fault,
The child is hers; and they will beat my girl
Remembering her mother: O my flower!
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,
And she will pass me by in after-life
With some cold reverence worse than were
she dead.

Ill mother that I was to leave her there,
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,
The horror of the shame among them all:
But I will go and sit beside the doors,
And make a wild petition night and day,
Until they hate to hear me like a wind
Wailing forever, till they open to me,
And lay my little blossom at my feet,
My babe, my sweet Aglaia, my one child:
And I will take her up and go my way,
And satisfy my soul with kissing her:
Ah! what might that man not deserve of me,
Who gave me back my child?" "Be com-
forted."

Said Cyril, "you shall have it," but again
She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank,
and so

Like tender things that being caught feign
death,

Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran
Thro' all the camp and inward raced the
scouts

With rumor of Prince Arac hard at hand.
We left her by the woman, and without

Found the gray kings at parle: and "Look
you," cried

My father, "that our compact be fulfill'd:
You have spoilt this child; she laughs at you
and man:

She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and
him:

But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire;
She yields, or war."

"Then Gama turn'd to rae:
"We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time
With our strange girl: and yet they say that
still

You love her. Give us, then, your mind at
large:

How say you, war or not?"

"Not war, if possible,
O king," I said, "lest from the abuse of war,
The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,
The smouldering homestead, and the house-
hold flower

Torn from the lintel—all the common
wrong—

A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her
Three times a monster: now she lightens
scorn

At him that mars her plan, but then would
hate

(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,

And every face she look'd on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this knot,
By gentleness than war. I want her love.
What were I nigher this a'tho' we dash'd
Your cities into shards with catapults,
She would not love;—or brought her chain'd,
a slave.

The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,
Not ever would she love; but brooding turn
The book of scorn till all my little chance
Were caught within the record of her wrongs,
And crush'd to death: and rather, Sire, than
this

I would the old god of war himself were dead,
Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,
Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,
Not to be molten out."

And roughly spoke
My father, "Tut, you know them not, the
girls.

Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think
That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir!
Man is the hunter; woman is his game:
The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
We hunt them for the beauty of their skies;
They love us for it, and we ride them down,
Wheeling and siding with them! Out! for
shame!

Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them
As he that does the thing they dare not do,
Breathing and sounding beauteous battle,
comes

With the air of the trumpet round him, and
leaps in

Among the women, snares them by the score
Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, though dash'd
with death

He reddens what he kisses: thus I won
Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,
Worth winning; but this firebrand—gentle-
ness

To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,
To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
Were wisdom to it."

"Yea, but Sire," I cried,
No:
"Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier?"

No:
What dares not Ida do that she should prize
The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose
The yester-night, and storming in extremes
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down
Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the
death,

No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her, king,
True woman: but you clash them all in one,
That have as many differences as we.

The violet varies from the lily as far
As oak from elm: one loves the soldier, one
The sicken priest of peace, one this, one that,
And some unworthily; their sinless faith,
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they
need

More breadth of culture: is not Ida right?
They worth it? truer to the law within?

Severer in the logic of a life?

Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
Of earth and heaven? and she of whom you
speak,

My mother, looks as whole as some serene
Creation minted in the golden moods
Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a touch,
But pure as lines of green that streak the
white

Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves: I say,
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual
mire,

But whole and one: and take them all-in-all,
Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,
As truthful, much that Ida claims as right
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs
As dues of Nature. To our point: not war:
Lest I lose all."

"Nay, nay, you spake but sense,"
Said Gama. "We remember love ourselves
In our sweet youth; we did not rate him then
This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.
You talk almost like Ida: she can talk;
And there is something in it as you say:

But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for it.—
He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,
I would he had our daughter: for the rest,
Our own detention, why the causes weigh'd,
Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—
We would do much to gratify your Prince—
We pardon it; and for your ingress here
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,
You did but come as goblins in the night,
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's
head,

Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-
maid,

Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream:
But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,
He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
And speak with Arac: Arac's word is thrice
As ours with Ida: something may be done—
I know not what—and ours shall see us
friends.

You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,
Follow us: who knows? we four may build
some plan

Foursquare to opposition."

Here he reach'd
White hands of farewell to my sire, who
grov'd
An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the
lawn
Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of
Spring

In every bole, a song on every spray
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and
woke

Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
In the old king's ears, who promised help,
and oozed

All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode;
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews
Gather'd by night and peace, with each light
air

On our mail'd heads: but other thoughts than
Peace

Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled
squares,
And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the
flowers

With clamor: for among them rose a cry
As if to greet the king: they made a halt:
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms;
the drum

Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial
fife;

And in the blast and bray of the long horn
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
The banner: anon to meet us lightly pranced
Three captains out; nor ever had I seen
Such thews of men: the midmost and the
highest

Was Arac: all about his motion clung
The shadow of his sister, as the beam
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made
them glance

Like those three stars of the airy Giant's
zone,

That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald, shone
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they
came.

And I that prated peace, when first I
heard

War-music felt the blind wildbeast of force,
Whose hoarse is in the sinews of a man,
Stir in me as to strike: then took the king
His three broad sons; with now a wandering
hand

And now a pointed finger, told them all:
A common light of smiles at our disguise
Broke from their lips, and ere the windy jest
Had labor'd down within his ample lungs,
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words.

"Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he him-
self

Your captive, yet my father wills not war:
And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I, war or
no?

But then this question of your troth remains:
And there's a downright honest meaning in
her;

She flies too high, she flies too high! and yet
She ask'd but space and fairplay for her
scheme:

She preest and preest it on me—I myself,
What know I of these things? but, life and
soul!

I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs:
I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what of
that?

I take her for the flower of womankind,
And so I often told her, right or wrong,
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she
loves,

And, right or wrong, I care not: this is all,
I stand upon her side: she made me swear
it—

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made me swear

'Sdeath, — and with solemn rites by candle-
light —
Swear by St. something — I forget her
name —
Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men:
She was a princess too; and so I swore.
Come, this is all; she will not: waive your
claim,
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once
Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's
will."

I lagg'd in answer loath to render up
My precontract, and loath by brainless war
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;
Till one of those two brothers, half aside
And fingering at the hair about his lip,
To prick us on to combat "Like to like!
The woman's garment hid the woman's
heart."

A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow!
For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point
Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,
"Decide it here: why not? we are three to
three."

Then spake the third, "But three to three?
no more?

No more, and in our noble sister's cause?
More, more, for honor: every captain waits
Hungry for honor, angry for his king.
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each
May breathe himself, and quick I by over-
throw

Of these or those, the question settled die."

"Yea," answer'd I, "for this wild wreath
of air,

This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
Foam of men's deeds — this honor, if ye will.
It needs must be for honor if at all:
Since, what decision? if we fail, "we fail,
And if we win, we fail: she would not keep
Her compact." "Sdeath! but we will send
to her."

Said Arac, "worthy reasons why she should
Bide by this issue: let our missive thro',
And you shall have her answer by the word."

"Boys!" shriek'd the old king, but vainlier
than a hen

To her false daughters in the pool; for none
Regarded; neither seem'd there more to say:
Back rode we to my father's camp, and found
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,
Or by denial flush her babbling claims
With her own people's life: three times he
went:

The first, he blew and blew, but none ap-
pear'd:

He batter'd at the doors; none came: the
next,

An awful voice within had warn'd him
thence:

The third, and those eight daughters of the
plough

Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught his
hair,

And so belabor'd him on rib and cheek
They made him wild: not less one glance he
caught

Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm
Tho' compass'd by two armies and the noise
Of arms; and standing like a stately Pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and right and
left

Suck'd from the dark heart of the long hills
roll

The torrents, dash'd to the vale: and yet her
will

Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash'd
His iron palms together with a cry:
Himself would tilt it out among the lads:
But overborne by all his bearded lords
With reasons drawn from age and state, per-
force

He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce de-
mur:

And many a bold knight started up in heat,
And swore to combat for my claim till death.

All on this side the palace ran the field
Flat to the garden wall: and likewise here,
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,
And great bronze valves, emboss'd with
Tomyris

And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barr'd: so here upon the flat
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd
up,

And all that morn the heralds to and fro,
With message and defiance, went and came;
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
But shaken here and there, and rolling words
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

"O brother, you have known the pangs we
felt,

What heats of indignation when we heard
Of those — that iron-cramp'd their women's
feet:

Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a
scourge;

Of living hearts that crack within the fire
Where smoulder their dead despots; and of
those, —

Mothers, — that, all prophetic pity, fling
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and
swoops

The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart
Made for all noble motion: and I saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times
With smother men: the old heaven leaven'd
all:

Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,
No woman named: therefore I set my face
Against all men, and lived but for mine own.
Far off from men I built a fold for them:

THE PRINCESS:

I stored it full of rich memorial:
 I fenced it round with gallant institutes,
 And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey,
 And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy boys
 Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our
 peace,
 Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know
 not what
 Of insolence and love, some pretext held
 Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
 Seal'd not the bond — the striplings! — for
 their sport! —
 I tamed my leopards: shall I not tame these?
 Or you? or I? for since you think me touch'd
 In honor — what, I would not aught of
 false —
 Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know
 Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's
 blood
 You draw from, fight; you failing, I abide
 What end soever: fail you will not. Still
 Take not his life: he risk'd it for my own;
 His mother lives: yet whatso'er you do,
 Fight and fight well; strike and strike home.
 O dear
 Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you,
 you
 The sole men to be mingled with our cause,
 The sole men we shall prize in the after-time,
 Your very armor hallow'd, and your statues
 Rear'd, sung to, when this gad-fly brush'd
 aside,
 We plant a solid foot into the Time,
 And mould a generation strong to move
 With claim on claim from right to right, till
 she
 Whose name is yoked with children's, know
 herself;
 And Knowledge in our own land make her
 free,
 And, ever following those two crowned
 twins,
 Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery
 grain
 Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs
 Between the Northern and the Southern
 morn."

Then came a postscript dash'd across the
 rest.
 "See that there be no traitors in your camp:
 We seem a nest of traitors — none to trust:
 Since our arms fail'd — this Egypt plague of
 men!
 Almost our maids were better at their homes,
 Than thus man-girdled here: indeed I think
 Our chiefest comfort is the little child
 Of one unworthy mother; which she left:
 She shall not have it back: the child shall
 grow
 To prize the authentic mother of her mind.
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed
 This morning: there the tender orphan
 hands
 Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from
 thence
 The wrath I nursed against the world: fare-
 well."

I ceased; he said: "Stubborn, but she
 may sit
 Upon a king's right hand in thunder-storms,
 And breed up warriors! See now, tho'
 yourself
 Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs
 That swallow common sense, the spindling
 king,
 This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.
 When the man wants weight, the woman
 takes it up,
 And topples down the scales; but this is fixt
 As are the roots of earth and base of all;
 Man for the field and woman for the hearth;
 Man for the sword and for the needle she:
 Man with the head and woman with the
 heart:
 Man to command and woman to obey;
 All else confusion. Look you! the gray
 mare
 Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills
 From tile to scullery, and her small good-
 man
 Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of
 Hell
 Mix with his hearth: but you — she's yet a
 colt —
 Take, break her: strongly groom'd and
 straitly curb'd
 She might not rank with those detestable
 That let the bantling scald at home, and
 brawl
 Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the
 street.
 They say she's comely; there's the fairer
 chance;
 /Like her none the less for rating at her!
 Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
 But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace
 Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,
 The bearing and the training of a child
 Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king:
 I took my leave, for it was nearly noon:
 I pored upon her letter which I held,
 And on the little clause "take not his life":
 I mused on that wild morning in the woods,
 And on the "Follow, follow, thou shalt
 win":
 I thought on all the wrathful king had said,
 And how the strange betrothment was to
 end:
 Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's
 curse
 That one should fight with shadows and
 should fall;
 And like a flash the weird affection came:
 King, camp and college turn'd to hollow
 shows:
 I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
 And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,
 To dream myself the shadow of a dream:
 And ere I woke it was the point of noon,
 The lists were ready. Empanopied and
 plumed
 We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
 Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared
 At the barrier like a wild horn in a land

Stubborn, but she
in thunder-storms,
! See now, tho'

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Of echoes, and a moment, and once more
The trumpet, and again: at which the storm
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears
And riders front to front, until they closed
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream; I
dream'd

Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
A noble dream! what was it else I saw?
Part sat like rocks; part reel'd but kept their
seats;

Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and
drew:

Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses.
Down

From those two bulks at Arac's side, and
down

From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
The large bulks rain'd, as here and every-
where

He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,
And all the plain — brand, mace, and shaft,
and shield —

Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd
With hammers; till I thought, can this be he
From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this be so,
The mother makes us most — and in my
dream

I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,
And highest, among the statues, statue-like,
Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,
A single band of gold about her hair,

Like a Saint's glory up in heaven: but she
No saint — inexorable — no tenderness —

Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me fight,
Yea, let her see me fall! with that I drave

Among the thickest and bore down a Prince,
And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my dream

All that I would. But that large-moulded
man,

His visage all agrin as at a wake,
Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering
back

With stroke on stroke the horse and horse-
man came

As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
Playing the roofs and sucking up the drains,

And shadowing down the champaign till it
strikes

On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and
cracks, and splits,

And twists the grain with such a roar that
Earth

Reels, and the herdsmen cry: for everything
Gave way before him: only Florian, he

That loved me closer than his own right eye,
Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down:

And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the
Prince,

With Psyche's color round his helmet, tough,
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;

But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote
And threw him: last I spur'd; I felt my
veins

Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to
hand,

And sword to sword, and horse to horse we
hung,

Till I struck out and shouted; the blade
glanced;

I did but shear a feather, and dream and
truth

Flow'd from me; darkness closed me; and
I fell.

Home they brought her warrior dead;
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:

All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,

Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,

Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee —

Like summer tempest came her tears —
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

VI.

My dream had never died or lived again.
As in some mystic middle state I lay:

Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard:
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all

So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,
That all things grew more tragic and more
strange;

That when our side was vanquish'd and my
cause

Forever lost, there went up a great cry,
The Prince is slain. My father heard and
ran

In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque
And grovelling'd on my body, and after him

Came Psyche, sorrowing for Agiaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm: there on the
roofs

Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: the
seed

The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a
bulk

Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n:
they came:

The leaves were wet with women's tears:
they heard

A noise of songs they would not understand :
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fall'n
themselves.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n :
they came,
The woodmen with their axes : lo the tree !
But we will make it fagots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and
floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n :
they struck ;
With their own blows they hurt themselves,
nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder
blade.

"Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall
grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power ; and
roll'd
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the
fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

"And now, O maids, behold our sanctu-
ary
Is violate, our laws broken : fear we not
To break them more in their behoof, whose
arms
Champion'd our cause and won it with a day
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,
When dames and heroines of the golden
year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round
Their statues, borne aloft, the three : but
come,
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse
mankind,
Ill nurses ; but descend, and proffer these
The brethren of our blood and cause, that
there
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender minis-
tries
Of female hands and hospitality."

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her
arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze valves,
and led
A hundred maids in train across the Park.
Some cow'd, and some bare-headed, on they
came,
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest : by them
went
The enamor'd air sighing, and on their curls
From the high tree the blossom wavering
fell,
And over them the tremulous isles of light,

Slided, they moving under shade : but
Blanche

At distance follow'd : so they came : anon
Thro' open field into the lists they wound
Timorously ; and as the leader of the herd
That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,
The lovely, lordly creature floated on
To where her wounded brethren lay ; there
stay'd :

Knelt on one knee, — the child on one, —
and prest
Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,
And happy warriors and immortal names,
And said, "You shall not lie in the tents but
here,
And nursed by those for whom you fought,
and served
With female hands and hospitality."

Then, whether moved by this, or was it
chance,
She past my way. Up started from my side
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,
Silent ; but when she saw me lying stark,
Disheilm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,
Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd ; and when she
saw

The haggard father's face and reverend beard
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead

past
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she
said :
"He saved my life : my brother slew him
for it."

No more : at which the king in bitter scorn
Drew from my neck the painting and the
tress,

And held them up : she saw them, and a day
Rose from the distance on her memory,
When the good Queen, her mother, shore
the tress

With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche :
And then once more she look'd at my pale
face :

Till understanding all the foolish work
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
Her iron will was broken in her breast ;
Her noble heart was molten in her breast ;
She bow'd, she set the child on the earth ;
she laid

A feeling finger on my brows, and presently
"O Sire," she said, "he lives : he is not
dead :

O let me have him with my brethren here
In our own palace : we will tend on him
Like one of these : if so, by any means,
To lighten this great clog of thanks, that
make
Our progress falter to the woman's goal."

She said : but at the happy word "he
lives,"
My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my
wounds.

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So those two foes above my fallen life,
With brow to brow like night and evening
mixture

• Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole
A little nearer, till the babe that by us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,
Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,
Uncared for, spied its mother and began
A blind and babbling laughter, and to daunce
Its body, and reach its falling innocent arms
And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal
Brook'd not, but clamoring out "Mine —
mine — not yours,

It is not yours, but mine: give me the child,"
Ceased all on tremble: piteous was the cry:
So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,
And turn'd each face her way: wan was her
cheek

With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,
Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,
And down dead-heavy sar: her curls, and
half

The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst
The laces toward her babe; but she nor cared
Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida heard,
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood
Erect and silent, striking with her glance
The mother, me, the child; but he that lay
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,
Trail'd himself up on one knee: then he
drew

Her robe to meet his lips, and down she
look'd

At the arm'd man sideways, pitying, as it
seem'd,

Or self-involved; but when she learnt his
face,

Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose
Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him
grew

Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said:

"O fair and strong and terrible! Lioness
That with your long locks play the Lion's
mane!

But Love and Nature, these are two more
terrible

And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,
We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your will.
What would you more? give her the child!

remain

Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,
Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be:

Win you the hearts of women; and beware
Lest, where you seek the common love of
these,

The common hate with the revolving wheel
Should drag you down, and some great
Nemesis

Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with
fire,

And tread you out forever: but howsoever
Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms

To hold your own, deny not hers to her,
Give her the child! O if, I say, you keep

One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved
The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,

Or own one part of sense not flint to prayer,
Give her the child! or if you scorn to pray,
Yourself, in hands so lately clapt with yours,
Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault
The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill,
Give me it; I will give it her."

He said:

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd
Dry flame, she listening: after sank and sank
And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt
Full on the child; she took it: "Pretty bud!
Lily of the vale! half-open'd bell of the
woods!

Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world
Of traitorous friend and broken system made
No purple in the distance, mystery,
Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell;
These men are hard upon us as of old,
We two must part: and yet how fair was I
To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to
think

I might be something to thee, when I felt
Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast
In the dead prime: but may thy mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false to me!
And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I
wish it

Gentle as freedom" — here she kissed it:
then —

"All good go with thee! take it, Sir," and
so

Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,
Who turn'd halfround to Psyche as she
sprang

To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks;
Then felt it sound and whole from head to
foot,

And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough,
And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,
And hid her bosom with it; after that

Put on more calm and added suppliantly:

"We two were friends: I go to mine own
land

Forever: find some other: as for me
I scarce am fit for your great plans: yet

speak to me,
Say one soft word and let me part forgiven,"

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.
Then Arac. "Ida — 'sdeath! you blame

the man;

You wrong yourselves — the woman is so hard
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!

I am your warrior: I and mine have fought
Your battle: kiss her; take her hand, she
weeps:

'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er
than see it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground,
And reddening in the furrows of his chin,
And moved beyond his custom, Gama said:

"I've heard that there is iron in the blood,
And I believe it. Not one word? not one?

Whence drew you this steel temper? not
from me,

Not from your mother now a saint with saints.
 She said you had a heart — I heard her say
 it —
 'Our Ida has a heart' — just ere she died —
 'But see that some one with authority
 Be near her still, and I — I sought for one —
 All people said she had authority —
 The Lady Blanche: much profit! Not one
 word;
 No! tho' your father sues: see how you stand
 Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights
 maim'd,
 I trust that there is no one hurt to death,
 For your wild whim: and was it then for this,
 Was it for this we gave our palace up,
 Where we withdrew from summer heats and
 state,
 And had our wine and chess beneath the
 planes,
 And many a pleasant hour with her that's
 gone,
 Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?
 Speak to her I say: is this not she of whom,
 When first she came, all flush'd you said to
 me
 Now had you got a friend of your own age,
 Now could you share your thought; now
 should men see
 Two women faster welded in one love
 Than pairs of wedlock; she you walk'd with,
 she
 You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in the
 tower,
 Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,
 And right ascension, Heaven knows what;
 and now
 A word, but one, one little kindly word,
 Not one to spare her: out upon you, flint!
 You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,
 You shame your mother's judgment too.
 Not one?
 You will not? well — no heart have you, or
 such
 As fancies like the vermin in a nut
 Have fretted all to dust and bitterness."
 So said the small king moved beyond his
 wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her
 force
 By many a varying influence and so long.
 Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor
 wept:
 Her head a little bent; and on her mouth
 A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon
 In a still water: then brake out my sire
 Lifting his grim head from my wounds. "O
 you,
 Woman, whom we thought woman even now,
 And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,
 Because he might have wish'd it — but we
 see
 The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,
 And think that you might mix his draught
 with death,
 When your skies change again: the rougher
 hand
 Is safer: on to the tents: take up the Prince."

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd to
 attend
 A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd her
 broke
 A genial warmth and light once more, and
 shone
 Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.
 "Come hither,
 O Psyche," she cried out, "embrace me,
 come,
 Quick while I melt; make reconciliation sure
 With one that cannot keep her mind an hour:
 Come to the hollow heart they slander so!
 Kiss and be friends, like children being chid!
 I seem no more: I want forgiveness too:
 I should have had to do with none but maids,
 That have no links with men. Ah false but
 dear,
 Dear traitor, too much loved, why? — why?
 Yet see,
 Before these kings we embrace you yet once
 more
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
 And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O Sire,
 Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon
 him,
 Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,
 This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know
 it;
 Taunt me no more: yourself and yours shall
 have
 Free adit; we will scatter all our maids
 Till happier times each to her proper hearth:
 What use to keep them here now? grant my
 prayer.
 Help, father, brother, help; speak to the king:
 Thaw this male nature to some touch of that
 Which kills me with myself, and drags me
 down
 From my fixt height to mob me up with all
 The soft and milky rabble of womankind,
 Poor weakling ev'n as they are."

Passionate tears
 Follow'd: the king replied not: Cyril said:
 "Your brother, Lady, — Florian, — ask for
 him
 Of your great head — for he is wounded too —
 That you may tend upon him with the
 prince."

"Ay so," said Ida with a bitter smile,
 "Our laws are broken: let him enter too."
 Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song,
 And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
 Petition'd too for him. "Ay so," she said,
 "I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep
 My heart an eddy from the brawling hour:
 We break our laws with ease, but let it be."
 "Ay so?" said Blanche: "Amazed am I to
 hear
 Your Highness: but your Highness breaks
 with ease
 The law your Highness did not make:
 't was I.
 I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,
 And block'd them out; but these men came
 to woo
 Your Highness — verily I think to win."

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye :
But Ida with a voice, that like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling
tower,
Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn.

"Fling our doors wide ! all, all, not one,
but all,
Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,
Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit,
Till the storm die ! but had you stood by us,
The roar that breaks the Pharos from his
base
Had left us rock. She fain would sting us
too,
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your
likes.
We brook no further insult but are gone."

She turn'd ; the very nape of her white
neck
Was rosed with indignation : but the Prince
Her brother came ; the king her father
charm'd
Her wounded soul with words : nor did mine
own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and
bare
Straight to the doors : to them the doors
gave way
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd
The virgin marble under iron heels :
And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and
there

Rest'd : but great the crush was, and each
base,
To left and right, of those tall columns
drown'd

In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers : at the further end
Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats
Close by her, like supporters on a shield,
Bow-back'd with fear : but in the centre
stood

The common men with rolling eyes ; amazed
They glared upon the women, and agast
The women stared at these, all silent, save
When armor clash'd or jingled, while the day,
Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot
A flying splendor out of brass and steel,
That o'er the statues leapt from head to
head,

Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,
And now and then an echo started up,
And shuddering fled from room to room, and
died

Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :
And me they bore up the broad stairs, and
thro'

The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors
To one deep chamber shut from sound, and
due

To languid limbs and sickness ; left me in it ;
And others elsewhere they laid ; and all
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing home
Till happier times ; but some were left of
those
Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,
From those two hosts that lay beside the
walls,
Walk'd at their will, and everything was
changed.

Ask me no more : the moon may draw the
sea ;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take
the shape,
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape ;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee ?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : what answer should I
give ?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye :
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die !
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live ;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : thy fate and mine are
seal'd :
I strove against the stream and all in vain :
Let the great river take me to the main :
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield ;
Ask me no more.

VII.

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turn'd to hospital ;
At first with all confusion : by and by
Sweet order lived again with other laws :
A kindlier influence reign'd ; and everywhere
Low voices with the ministering hand
Hung round the sick : the maidens came,
they talk'd,
They sang, they read : till she not fair, began
To gather light, and she that was, became
Her former beauty treble ; and to and fro
With books, with flowers, with Angel offices,
Like creatures native unto gracious act,
And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
And hatred of her weakness, blent with
shame.
Old studies fail'd ; seldom she spoke ; but
oft
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men
Darkening her female field : void was her
use ;
And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great black
cloud
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,
And suck the blinding splendor from the
sand,

And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn
Expunge the world: so fared she gazing
there;
So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank
And waste it seem'd and vain; till down she
came,
And found fair peace once more among the
sick.

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by morn
the lark
Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres, but I
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life:
And twilight gloom'd; and broader-grown
the bowers
Drew the great night into themselves, and
Heaven,
Star after star, arose and fell; but I,
Deeper than those weird doubts could reach
me, lay
Quite under'd from the moving Universe,
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand
That nursed me, more than infants in their
sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian: with her oft
Melissa came; for Blanche had gone, but left
Her child among us, willing she should keep
Court-favor: here and there the small bright
head,

A light of healing, glanced about the couch,
Or thro' the parted silks the tender face
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man
With blush and smile, a medicine in them-
selves

To wile the length from languorous hours,
and draw
The sting from pain; nor seem'd it strange
that soon

He rose up whole, and those fair charities
Join'd at her side; nor stranger seem'd that
hearts

So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,
Than when two dew-drops on the petal shake
To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper
down,

And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd
At first with Psyche. Not though Blanche
had sworn

That after that dark night among the fields,
She needs must wed him for her own good
name;

Not tho' he built upon the babe restored;
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but
fear'd

To incense the Head once more; till on a day
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
Seen but of Psyche: on her foot she hung
A moment, and she heard, at which her face
A little flush'd, and she past on; but each
Assumed from thence a half-consent involved
In stillness, plighted troth, and weds at peace.

Nor only these: Love in the sacred halls
Held carnival at will, and flying struck
With showers of random sweet on maid and
man.

Nor did her father cease to press my claim,
Nor did mine own now reconciled; nor yet
Did those twin brothers, risen again and
whole;

Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat:
Then came a change; for sometimes I would
catch

Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek
"You are not Ida"; clasp it once again,
And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,
And call her sweet, as if in irony,
And call her hard and cold which seem'd a
truth:

And still she fear'd that I should lose my
mind,

And often she believed that I should die:
Till out of long frustration of her care,
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,
And watches in the dead, the dark, when
clocks

Throb'd'd thunder thro' the palace floors, or
call'd

On flying Time from all their silver tongues—
And out of memories of her kindlier days,
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,
And at the happy lovers heart in heart—
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,
And often feeling of the helpless hands,
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek—
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,
Love, like an Alpine harbell hung with tears
By some cold morning glacier; frail at first
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but wellnigh close to
death

For weakness: it was evening: silent light
Slept on the painted walls, wherein were
wrought

Two grand designs: for on one side arose
The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd
At the Opian law. Titanic shapes, they
cramm'd

The forum, and half-crush'd among the rest
A dwarflike Cato cower'd. On the other side
Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,
A train of dames: by axe and eagle sat,
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman
scowls,

And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their
veins,

The fierce triumvirs; and before them paused
Hortensia, pleading: angry was her face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where I was:
They did but seem as hollow shows; nor
more

Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the dew
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape
And rounder show'd: I moved: I sigh'd: a
touch

Came round my wrist, and tears upon my
hand:

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Then all for languor and self-pity ran
Mine down my face, and with what life I had,
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,
So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her
Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisperingly:

"If you be, what I think you, some sweet
dream,
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:
But if you be that *Ida* whom I knew,
I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-
night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die."

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,
That hear'd his burial talk'd of by his friends,
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one
sign,
But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd;
she paused;

She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt a cry:
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death;
And I believed that in the living world
My spirit clos'd with *Ida*'s at the lips;
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose
Glowing all over noble shame; and all
Her fals'd self slipt from her like a robe,
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood
Than in her mould that other, when she came
From barren deeps to conquer all with love:
And down the streaming crystal dropt; and

she
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
Naked, a double light in air and wave,
To meet her *Graces*, where they deck'd her
out

For worship without end; nor end of mine,
Stateliest, for thee! but mute she glided
forth,

Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,
Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a happy
sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near me,
held
A volume of the Poets of her land:
There to herself, all in low tones, she read.

"Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the
white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The firefly wakens: waken thou with me.

"Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a
ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

"Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

"Now slides the silent meteor on, and
leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

"Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me."

I heard her turn the page; she found a
small
Sweet *Idyl*, and once more, as low, she read:

"Come down, O maid, from yonder moun-
tain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd
sang)

In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and
cease

To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spiced purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the Silver
Horns

Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley: let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and
spill

Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-
smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the
vales

Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned; while with shut eyes I
lay

Listening; then look'd. Pale was the perfect
face:

The bosom with long sighs labor'd; and meek
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous
eyes,

And the voice trembled and the hand. She
said

Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd
In sweet humility; had fail'd in all:
That all her labor was but as a block
Left in the quarry; but she still were loath,
She still were loath to yield herself to one.
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal
rights

Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.
She pray'd me not to judge their cause from
her

That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than
power

In knowledge: something wild within her breast,
 A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.
 And she had nursed me there from week to week:
 Much had she learnt in little time. In part
 It was ill-counsel had misled the girl
 To vex true hearts: yet was she but a girl—
 "Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of
 face!"

When comes another such? never, I think
 Till the Sun drop dead from the signs."
 Her voice
 Choked, and her forehead sank upon her
 hands,
 And her great heart through all the faultful
 Past
 Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not
 break;
 Till notice of a change in the dark world
 Was lisped about the acacias, and a bird,
 That early woke to feed her little ones,
 Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light:
 She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.
 "Blame not thyself too much," I said, "nor
 blame
 Too much the sons of men and barbarous
 laws;
 These were the rough ways of the world till
 now.
 Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know
 The woman's cause is man's: they rise or
 sink
 Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free:
 For she that out of Lethe scales with man
 The shining steps of Nature, shares with
 man
 His nights, his days, moves with him to one
 goal,
 Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—
 If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
 How shall men grow? but work no more
 alone!

Our place is much: as far as in us lies
 We two will serve them both in aiding her—
 Will clear away the parasitic forms
 That seem to keep her up but drag her
 down—
 Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
 Within her—let her make herself her own
 To give or keep, to live and learn and be
 All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
 For woman is not undeveloped man,
 But diverse: could we make her as the man,
 Sweet love were slain: his dearest bond is
 this,
 Not like to like, but like in difference.
 Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
 The man be more of woman, she of man;
 He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the
 world;
 She mental breadth, nor fail in childward
 care,
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
 Till at the last she set herself to man,
 Like perfect music unto noble words;
 And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,

Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their
 powers,
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
 Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
 Distinct in individualities,
 But like each other ev'n as those who love.
 Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:
 Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste
 and calm:
 Then springs the crowning race of humankind,
 May these things be!"

They will not." Sighing she spoke, "I fear
 "Dear, but let us type them now
 In our own lives, and this proud watchword
 rest
 Of equal; seeing either sex alone
 Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
 Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
 Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
 Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
 The single pure and perfect animal,
 The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full
 stroke,
 Life."

And again sighing she spoke: "A dream
 That once was mine! what woman taught
 you this?"

"Alone," I said, "from earlier than I know,
 Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
 I loved the woman: he, that doth not, lives
 A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
 Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
 Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with
 crime:
 Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her,
 one
 Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
 Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants.
 No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
 In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
 Interpreter between the Gods and men,
 Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
 On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
 Too gross to tread, and all male minds per-
 force
 Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
 And girdled her with music. Happy he
 With such a mother! faith in womankind
 Beats with his blood, and trust in all things
 high
 Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
 He shall not blind his soul with clay."

"But I,"
 Said Ida, tremulously, "so all unlike—
 It seems you love to cheat yourself with
 words:
 This mother is your model. I have heard
 Of your strange doubts: they well might be:
 I seem
 A mockery to thy own self. Never, Prince;
 You cannot love me."

"Nay but thee," I said,
 "From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,
 Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and
 saw
 This woman thro' the crust of iron moods

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Never, Prince;

thee," I said,
pictured eyes,
thee seen, and

iron moods

That mask'd thee from men's reverence up,
and forced

Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood: now,
Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro' thee,
Indeed I love: the new day comes, the light
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults
Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts are
dead,

My haunting sense of hollow shows: the
change,

This truthful change in thee has kill'd it.
Dear,

Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,
Like yonder morning on the blind half-world;
Approach and fear not; breathe upon my
brows;

In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this
Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. For-
give me,

I waste my heart in signs: let be. My bride,
My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end.

And so thro' those dark gates across the wild
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee:
come,

Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are one:
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to
me."

CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give you all
The random scheme as wildly as it rose:
The words are mostly mine; for when we
ceased

There came a minute's pause, and Walter
said,

"I wish she had not yielded!" then to me,
"What, if you drest it up poetically!"

So pray'd the men, the women: I gave assent:
Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of seven
Together in one sheaf? What style could
suit?

The men required that I should give through-
out

The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
With which we banter'd little Lilia first:
The women — and perhaps they felt their
power,

For something in the ballads which they sang,
Or in their silent influence as they sat,
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close —
They hated banter, wish'd for something real,
A gallant fight, a noble princess — why
Not make her true-heroic — true-sublime?
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?
Which yet with such a framework scarce could
be.

Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,
Betwixt the mockers and the realists;
And I, betwixt them both, to please them
both,

And yet to give the story as it rose,
I moved as in a strange diagonal,
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part
In our dispute: the sequel of the tale

Had touch'd her; and she sat, she pluck'd
the grass,

She flung it from her, thinking: last, she fix'd
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
"You — tell us what we are" who might
have told,

For she was cramm'd with theories out of
books,

But that there rose a shout: the gates were
closed

At sunset, and the crowd were swarming
now,

To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these: we
climb'd

The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw
The happy valleys, half in light, and half
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of
peace;

Gray halls alone among the massive groves;
Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic tower
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of
wheat;

The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the
seas;

A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of
France.

"Look there, a garden!" said my college
friend,

The Tory member's elder son, "and there!
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,
And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have
made,

Some patient force to change them when we
will,

Some civic manhood firm against the crowd —
But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden
heat,

The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,
The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,
The little boys begin to shoot and stab,
A kingdom topples over with a shriek.

Like an old woman, and down rolls the world
In mock heroics stranger than our own;
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
No graver than a school-boys' barring out;

Too comic for the solemn things they are,
Too solemn for the comic touches in them.

Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream
As some of theirs — God bless the narrow
seas!

I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad."

"Have patience," I replied, "ourselves
are full

Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams

Are but the needful preludes of the truth :
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith.
This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience ! Give it time
To learn its limbs : there is a hand that
guides."

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails,
And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
Among six boys, head under head, and look'd
No little lily-handed Baronet he,
A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none ;
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn ;
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of
those
That stood the nearest—now address'd to
speech—
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as
closed
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year
To follow : a shout rose again, and made
The long line of the approaching rookery
swerve
From the elms, and shook the branches of
the deer

From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and
rang
Beyond the bourn of sunset ; O, a shout
More joyful than the city-roar that hails
Premier or king ! Why should not these
great Sirs
Give up their parks some dozen times a year
To let the people breathe ? So thrice they
cried,
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat
on,
So much the gathering darkness charm'd :
we sat
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,
Perchance upon the future man : the walls
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls
whoop'd,
And gradually the powers of the night,
That range above the region of the wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them
up
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of
Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well-pleased
we went.

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IN MEMORIAM.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust;
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
What seem'd my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849

IN MEMORIAM

A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.

I.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years,
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss:
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
"Behold the man that loved and lost
But all he was is overworn."

II.

OLD Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the underlying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fall from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O SORROW, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run;
A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands, —
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own, —
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire
"What is it makes me beat so low?"

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darken'd eyes;
With morning wakes the will, and cries,
"Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

V.

I SOMETIMES hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold;
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI.

ONE writes, that "Other friends remain,"
That "Loss is common to the race," —
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for gain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more;
Too common! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgedst now thy gallant son:
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor, — while thy head is bow'd,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought;

Expecting still his advent home:
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, here to-day,
Or here to-morrow will he come.

O somewhere, meek unconscious dove,
That sittest ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;
And thinking "This will please him best,"
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her color burns;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of grief?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

VII.

DARK house, by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more, —
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII.

A HAPPY lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet,
The field, the chamber, and the street,
For all is dark where thou art not.

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Yet as that other, wandering there
 In those deserted walks, may find
 A flower beat with rain and wind,
 Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,
 O my forsaken heart, with thee
 And this poor flower of poesy
 Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
 I go to plant it on his tomb,
 That if it can it there may bloom,
 Or dying, there at least may die.

IX.

FAIR ship, that from the Italian shore
 Sailest the placid ocean-plains
 With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
 In vain : a favorable speed
 Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
 Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
 As our pure love, thro' early light
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the pri-
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
 My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run ;
 Dear as the mother to the son,
 More than my brothers are to me.

X.

I HEAR the noise about thy keel ;
 I hear the bell struck in the night ;
 I see the cabin-window bright ;
 I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bringest the sailor to his wife,
 And travell'd men from foreign lands ;
 And letters unto trembling hands ;
 And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :
 This look of quiet flatters thus
 Our home-bred fancies : O to us,
 The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
 That takes the sunshine and the rains,
 Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
 The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
 Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine ;
 And hands so often clasp'd in mine
 Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI.

CALM is the morn without a sound,
 Calm as to suit a calmer grief,

And only thro' the faded leaf
 The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high world
 And on these dews that drench the furze,
 And all the silvery gossamers
 That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain
 That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
 And crowded farms and lessening towers,
 To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
 These leaves that redden to the fall ;
 And in my heart, if calm at all,
 If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
 And waves that sway themselves in rest,
 And dead calm in that noble breast
 Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
 To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
 Some dolorous message knit below
 The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go : I cannot stay ;
 I leave this mortal ark behind,
 A weight of nerves without a mind,
 And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
 And reach the glow of southern skies,
 And see the sails at distance rise,
 And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying, " Comes he thus, my friend ?
 Is this the end of all my care ?"
 And circle moaning in the air :
 " Is this the end ? Is this the end ?"

And forward dart again, and play
 About the prow, and back return
 To where the body sits, and learn,
 That I have been an hour away.

XIII.

TEARS of the widow when he sees
 A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
 And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
 Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss forever new,
 A void where heart on heart reposed ;
 And, where warm hands have prest and
 clos'd,
 Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
 An awful thought, a life removed,
 The human-hearted man I loved,
 A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,
 I do not suffer in a dream ;
 For now so strange do these things seem,
 Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching sails,
As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV.

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine;
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had droop'd of late,
And he should sorrow o'er my state
And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

XV.

To-NIGHT the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day:
The red red leaf is whirl'd away,
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
The cattle huddled on the lea;
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
That all thy motions gently pass
Athwart a plane of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
And but for fear it is not so,
The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a laboring breast,
And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI.

WHAT words are these have fall'n from me?
Can calm despair and wild unrest
Be tenants of a single breast,
Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take
The touch of change in calm or storm;
But knows no more of transient form
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
Hung in the shadow of a heaven?
Or has the shock, so harshly given,
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
And staggers blindly ere she sink?
And stunn'd me from my power to think
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan?

XVII.

Thou comest, much wept for: such a breeze
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer
Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
Week after week: the days go by:
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,
My blessing, like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark;
And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by thee;
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run.

XVIII.

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing through his lips impart
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again.

XIX.

THE Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XX.

THU lesser griefs that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender vows,
Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the fullness from the mind:
"It will be hard," they say, "to find
Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort win;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain freeze:

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,
And scarce endure to draw the breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit:

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and think,
"How good! how kind! and he is gone."

XXI.

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he speak:
"This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers, "Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth, "Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power?"

"A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon?"

Behold, ye weak an idle thing:
Ye never knew the sacred dust:
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad: her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged;
And one is sad: her note is changed,
Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXII.

THE path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow:

And we with singing cheer'd the way,
And crown'd with all the season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walk'd began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended, following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
And think that somewhere in the waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, "How changed from where it
THU
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb;
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan:

"When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with
Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

"And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

"And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady."

XXIV.

AND was the day of my delight
As sure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of Day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so great?
The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein?

XXV.

I KNOW that this was Life, — the track
Whereon with equal feet we fared;
And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of love;

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave in twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI.

STILL onward winds the dreary way;
I with it; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the moulder'd tree,
And towers fall'n as soon as built, —

O, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see (in Him is no before)
In more of life true life no more,
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII.

I ENVY not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes:

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth,
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'T is better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII.

THE time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fall, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and good-will, good-will and peace,
Peace and good-will, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,
The merry, merry bells of Yule.

XXIX.

WITH such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve;

Which brings no more a welcome guest
To enrich the threshold of the night
With shower'd largess of delight,
In dance and song and game and jest.

Yet go, and while the holly-boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font,
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont
That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new;
Why should they miss their yearly due
Before their time? They too will die.

XXX.

WITH trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gamboll'd, making vain pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech
We heard them sweep the winter land;
And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang:
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
Upon us: surely rest is meet:
"They rest," we said, "their sleep is
sweet,"
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
Once more we sang: "They do not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change;

"Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gather'd power, yet the same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.

XXXI.

WHEN Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd,
Was this demanded, — if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four
days?"
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
He told it not; or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII.

HER eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

XXXIII.

O THOU that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister, when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy views;
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good:
O, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And ev'n for want of such a type.

XXXIV.

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live forevermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild Poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
'T were hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

'T were best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness, and to cease.

XXXV.

YET if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house,
"The cheeks drop in; the body bows;
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust";

Might I not say, "Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive"?
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
 "The sound of that forgetful shore
 Will change my sweetness more and more,
 Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me! what profits it to put
 An idle case? If Death were seen
 At first as Death, Love had not been,
 Or been in narrowest working shut,

More fellowship of sluggish moods,
 Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
 Had bruised the herb and crush'd, the
 grape,
 And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXVI.

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
 Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
 We yield all blessing to the name
 Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
 Where truth in closest words shall fail,
 When truth embodied in a tale
 Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
 With human hands the creed of creeds
 In loveliness of perfect deeds,
 More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
 And those wild eyes that watch the wave
 In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII.

URANIA speaks with darken'd brow;
 "Thou pratest here where thou art least;
 This faith has many a purer priest,
 And many an abler voice than thou.

"Go down beside thy native rill,
 On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
 And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
 About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene replies,
 A touch of shame upon her cheek:
 "I am not worthy ev'n to speak
 Of thy prevailing mysteries;

"For I am but an earthly Muse,
 And owning but a little art
 To lull with song an aching heart,
 And render human love his dues;

"But brooding on the dear one dead,
 And all he said of things divine,
 (And dear to me as sacred wine
 To dying lips is all he said,)

"I murmur'd, as I came along,
 Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd;
 And loiter'd in the Master's field,
 And darken'd sanctities with song."

XXXVIII.

With weary steps I loiter on,
 Tho' always under alter'd skies
 The purple from the distance dies,
 My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
 The herald melodies of spring,
 But in the songs I love to sing
 A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
 Survive in spirits render'd free,
 Then are these songs I sing of thee
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX.

COULD we forget the widow'd hour,
 And look on Spirits breathed away,
 As on a maiden in the day
 When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise
 To take her latest leave of home,
 And hopes and light regrets that come
 Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
 And tears are on the mother's face,
 As parting with a long embrace
 She enters other realms of love:

Her office there to rear, to teach,
 Becoming, as is meet and fit,
 A link among the days, to knit
 The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
 A life that bears immortal fruit
 In such great offices as suit
 The full-grown energies of heaven.

AY me, the difference I discern!
 How often shall her old fireside
 Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,
 How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
 And bring her babe, and make her boast,
 Till even those that miss'd her most
 Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,
 Till growing winters lay me low;
 My paths are in the fields I know,
 And thine in undiscover'd lands.

XL.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
 Did ever rise from high to higher;
 As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
 As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,
 And I have lost the links that bound
 Thy changes; here upon the ground,
 No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly ! yet that this could be, —
That I could wing my will with might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee :

For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death ;
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields :

Yet oft when sundown : skirts the morn
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to thee,
Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLI.

I vex my heart with fancies dim :
He still outstript me in the race ;
It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will :

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves, but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows ?

XLII.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its interval gloom
In some long trance should slumber on :

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began ;

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIII.

How fares it with the happy dead ?
For here the man is more and more ;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
Gives out at times (he knows not whence)
A little flash, a mystic hint ;

And in the long harmonious years
(If Death so taste Lethean springs)
May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O turn thee round, resolve the doubt ;
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLIV.

THE baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that " this is I " :

But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of " I," and " me,"
And finds " I am not what I see,"
And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may begin,
As thro' the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their due,
Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLV.

We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and flower,
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it : there no shade can last
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past :

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd ;
The fruitful hours of still increase ;
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
A bounded field, nor stretching far ;
Look also, Love, a brooding star,
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVI.

THAT each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unswelt :
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside ;
And I shall know him when we meet :

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good ;
What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth ? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
"Farewell! We lose ourselves in light."

XLVII.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
Then these were such as men might scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;
She takes, when harsher moods remit,
What slender shade of doubt may flit,
And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
But better serves a wholesome law,
And holds it sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLVIII.

From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let random influences glance,
Like light in many a shiver'd lance
That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,
The slightest air of song shall breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
But blame not thou the winds that make
The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears,
Ay me! the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly drown
The bases of my life in tears.

XLIX.

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust:
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

L.
Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame,
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
There must be wisdom with great Death:
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

LI.

I CANNOT love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing beloved;
My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

"Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,"
The Spirit of true love replied;
"Thou canst not move me from thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

"What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears?
What record? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:

"So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin,
Abide: thy wealth is gather'd in,
When Time hath Sunder'd shell from pearl."

LII.

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and green:

And dare we to this fancy give,
That had the wild-oat not been sown,
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
The grain by which a man may live?

O, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and be
Procureess to the Lords of Hell.

LIII.

O YET we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood:

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold we know not anything ;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?
An infant crying in the night :
An infant crying for the light :
And with no language but a cry.

LIV.

THE wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likeliest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams ?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LV.

"So careful of the type?" but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, "A thousand types are gone :
I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me :
I bring to life, I bring to death :
The spirit does but mean the breath :
I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed,
And love Creation's final law,—
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed,—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills ?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail !
O for thy voice to sooth and bless !
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil."

LVI.

PEACE : come away : the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song :
Peace : come away : we do him wrong
To sing so wildly : let us go.

Come ; let us go : your cheeks are pale ;
But half my life I leave behind :
Methinks my friend is richly shrined :
But I shall pass ; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead ;
And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,
"Adieu, adieu," forevermore.

LVII.

IN those sad words I took farewell :
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to day,
Half conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd : "Wherefore
grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear ?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

LVIII.

O SORROW, wilt thou live with me,
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life ;
As I confess it needs must be ;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day ;
But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love ;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to come,
That, howsoever I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LIX.

He past : a soul of lover's tone :
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by :
At night she weeps, "How vain am I !
How should he love a thing so low ?"

LX.

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransom'd reason change replies
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time ;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly character'd and slight,
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a man ;
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

LXI.

Tho' if an eye that 's downward cast
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,
Then be my love an idle tale,
And fading legend of the past ;

And thou, as one that once declined
When he was little more than boy,
On some unworthy heart with joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind ;

And breathes a novel world, the while
His other passion wholly dies,
Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

LXII.

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
And love in which my hound has part,
Can hang no weight upon my heart
In its assumptions up to heaven ;

And I am so much more than these,
As thou, perchance, art more than I,
And yet I spare them sympathy,
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
As, unto vaster motions bound,
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIII.

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known,
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearthness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He play'd at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands :
"Does my old friend remember me ?"

LXIV.

SWEET soul, do with me as thou wilt ;
I lull a fancy trouble-tost
With "Love's too precious to be lost,
A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing,
Till out of painful phase wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing :

Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee,
And move thee on to noble ends.

LXV.

You thought my heart too far diseased ;
You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost ;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand :

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky ;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always *these*.

LXVI.

WHEN on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest,
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name.
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away :
From off my bed the moonlight dies ;
And, closing eaves of wearied eyes,
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church, like a ghost,
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVII.

WHEN in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my
breath ;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not
Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead :

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this ? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad, I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt :

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth :
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXVIII.

I DREAM'D there would be Spring no more,
That Nature's ancient power was lost :
The streets were black with smoke and
frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door :

I wander'd from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny boughs :
I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown :

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary hairs :

They call'd me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns :

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child :
I found an angel of the night ;
The voice was low, the look was bright ;
He look'd upon my crown and smiled :

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into leaf :
The voice was not the voice of grief ;
The words were hard to understand.

LXIX.

I CANNOT see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to paint
The face I know ; the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night ;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points and palled shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,
And shoals of pucker'd faces drive ;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores :

Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXX.

SLEEP, kinsman thou to death and trance
And madness, thou hast forged at last
A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul ?
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong
That so my pleasure may be whole ;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of change,
The days that grow to something strange,
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
The cataract flashing from the bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXI.

RISEST thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane ?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sicken'd every living bloom,
And blurr'd the splendor of the sun ;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the rose

Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower ;

Who might'st have heaved a windlass flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd
A chequer-work of beam and shade
Along the hills, yet looked the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now ;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime
When the dark hand struck down thro'
time,

And cancell'd nature's best : but thou,

Lift as thou mayst thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the morning
star,

And whirl the ungarn'd sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day ;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXII.

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true ?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath :
I curse not nature, no, nor death ;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass ; the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds :
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age ? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXIII.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out — to some one of his race :

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXIV.

I LEAVE thy praises unexpress'd
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd ;

What practice howso'er expert
In fitting aptest words to things,
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not in these fading days
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
The world which credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;
But somewhere, out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXV.

TAKE wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighten thro'
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these, have clothed their branchy bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain ;
And what are they when these remain
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

LXXVI.

WHAT hope is here for modern rhyme
To him who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's locks ;
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that tells
A grief, then changed to something else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darken'd ways
Shall ring with music all the same ;
To breathe my loss is more than fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVII.

AGAIN at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;
The silent snow possess'd the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve ;

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic picture's breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain;
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!
No, — mixt with all this mystic frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXVIII.

"More than my brothers are to me," —
Let this not vex thee, noble heart!
I know thee of what force thou art
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
Thro' all his eddying coves; the same
All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
One lesson from one book we learn'd,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was poor,
And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXIX.

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his side,
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
I hear the sentence that he speaks;
He bears the burthen of the weeks:
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
Unused example from the grave
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXX.

COULD I have said while he was here,
"My love shall now no further range;
There cannot come a mellow change,
For now is love mature in ear."

Love, then, had hope of richer store:
What end is here to my complaint?
This haunting whisper makes me faint,
"More years had made me love thee more."

But Death returns an answer sweet:
"My sudden frost was sudden gain,
And gave all ripeness to the grain
It might have drawn from after-heat."

LXXXI.

I WAGE not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form and face;
No lower life that earth's embrace
May breed with him can frighn my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks;
And these are but the shatter'd stalks,
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth:
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXII.

DIP down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year, delaying long:
Thou doest expectant nature wrong;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud,
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIII.

WHEN I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the glow
To which thy crescent would have grown:

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss

In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
For now the day was drawing on
When thou shouldst link thy life with one
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had bawled "Uncle" on my knee;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange-flower,
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, gen'l table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills,

With promise of a morn as fair;
And all the train of bounteous hours
Conduct by paths of growing powers
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should sail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
As link'd with thine in love and fate,
Aid, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What need was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitterness again, and break
The low beginnings of content?

LXXXIV.

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
'T is better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed,
Demanding, so to bring relief
To this which is our common grief,
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
Be dimm'd of sorrow or sustain'd;
And whether love for him have drain'd
My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
A faithful answer from the breast,
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message falls,
That in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
And show'd him in the fountain fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,
Whose life, whose thoughts were little
worth,
To wander on a darken'd earth,
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
O heart, with kindest motion warm,
O sacred essence, other form,
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands,
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
With gifts of grace, that might express
All-comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
To works of weakness, but I find
An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
That loved to handle spiritual strife,
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
To mourn for any overmuch;
I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
Eternal, separate from fears;

The all-assuming months and years
Can take no part away from this :

But Summer on the steaming floods,
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave :

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness, yearns to speak :
" Arise, and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come.

" I watch thee from the quiet shore ;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more."

And I, " Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free ?
How is it ? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain ? "

And lightly does the whisper fall :
" 'T is hard for thee to fathom this :
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead ;
Or so methinks the dead would say ;
Or so shall grief with symbols play,
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours ?
First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXV.

SWEET after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and
Death,

Ill brethren let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odor streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper " Peace."

LXXXVI.

I PAST beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown ;
I roved a random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls ;

And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophets blazon'd on the paces ;

And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows ; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same ; and last
Up that long walk of limes I past
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door :
I linger'd ; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor ;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string ;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there ;

And last the master-bowman, he
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo.

LXXXVII.

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,
O tell me where the senses mix,
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midst heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I — my harp would prelude woe —
I cannot all command the strings :
The glory of the sum of things
Will fla-ⁿ along the chords and go.

LXXXVIII.

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright ;
And thou, with all thy breadth and height
Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;
He mixt in all our simple sports ;
They pleased him, fresh from broiling
courts

And dusty purloins of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking thro' the heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
The gust that round the garden flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poet on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the livelong summer day
With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
Or touch'd the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For "ground in yonder social mill,
We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge," he said, "in form and gloss
The picturesque of man and man."
We talk'd : the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;
And 'ast, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

LXXXIX.

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling
This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resuscitate their life,
They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise :

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who passed away,
Behold their brides in other hands ;
The hard heir strides about their lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would make
Confusion worse than death, and shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XC.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush ;
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers ;
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe, with many roses sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCI.

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain,
As but the canker of the brain ;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind.
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring th' past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year ;
And tho' the months, revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

XCII.

I SHALL not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land,
Where first he walk'd when clasp'd in clay ?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb ;
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in unconjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter : hear
The wish too strong for words to name ;
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIII.

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold,
Should be the man whose thought would
hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

XCIV.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry ;
And genial warmth ; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd :
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at
ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read
Of that glad year that once had been,
In those fall'n leaves which kept their
green,
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward back,
And keen thro' wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
His living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time, the shocks of Chance,
The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or ev'n for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knoll once more where, couch'd at
ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And, suck'd from out the distant gloom,
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering fresher overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said,

"The dawn, the dawn," and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

xcv.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jargon-pyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true:

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

xcvi.

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;
He finds on misty mountain-ground
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life, —
I look'd on these, and thought of thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,
Their meetings made December June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
He loves her yet, she will not weep,
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
A wither'd violet is her bias;
She knows not what his greatness is:
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and wise,
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
"I cannot understand: I love."

xcvii.

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sail'd below,
When I was there with him: and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
That City. All her splendor seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me:
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
Her shadow on the blaze of kings:
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCVIII.

RISKEST thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead ;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves ;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath,
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls ;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

XCIX.

I CLIMB the hill : from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend ;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering reed,
Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

No hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill,
And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right thro' meadowy curves,
That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day ;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

C.

UNWATCH'D, the garden bough shall away,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,
At noon, or when the lesser wain
Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of fern and crake ;
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow,
Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the laborer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades ;
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CI.

We leave the well-beloved place
Where first we gazed upon the sky ;
The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse lood
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, here thy boyhood sung
Long since its matin song, and heard
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung.

The other answers, " Yea, but here
Thy feet have strayed in after hours
With thy lost friend among the bowers,
And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go : my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and farms ;
They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CII.

ON that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was bred,
I dream'd a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
And maidens with me : distant hills
From hidden summits fed with rills
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and good
And graceful. In the centre stood
A statue veil'd, to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,
The shape of him I loved, and love
Forever : then flew in a dove
And brought a summons from the sea ;

And when they learnt that I must go,
They wept and wail'd, but led the way
To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made the banks,
We glided winding under ranks
Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore,
And roll'd the floods in grander space,
The maidens gather'd strength and grace
And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart
And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb ;
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race, which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides
Began to foam, and we to draw,
From deep to deep, to where we saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck ;

Whereat those maidens with one mind
Bewail'd their lot ; I did them wrong ;
"We served thee here," they said, "so
long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind?"

So rapt I was, they could not win
An answer from my lips, but he
Replying, "Enter likewise ye
And go with us" : they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
A music out of sheet and shroud,
We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud
That landlike slept along the deep.

CIII.

The time draws near the birth of Christ :
The moon is hid, the night is still ;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CIV.

This holly by the cottage-eave,
To-night, ungather'd, shall it stand ;
We live within the stranger's land,
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows ;
There in due time the woodbine blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
The genial hour with mask and mime ;
For change of place, like growth of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;
For who would keep an ancient form
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown ;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
Long sleeps the summer in the seed ;
Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

CV.

Ring out wild bells to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light :
The year is dying in the night ;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow :
The year is going, let him go ;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more ;
Ring out t' a feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife ;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times ;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite ;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;

ge-eave,
shall it stand:
anger's land,
Christmas-eve.

alone
r snows:
woodbine blows,
e are gone.

grief abuse
mask and mime;
like growth of time,
lying use.

ows cast,
chiefly proved,
I loved,
e past.

he floor,
antle warm;
ancient form
eathes no more?

a, nor feast;
or flute be blown;
ave alone
least

r wood.
r in the seed;
arcs, and lead
ood.

wild sky,
sty light:
night;
t him die.

e new,
the snow:
n go;
he true.

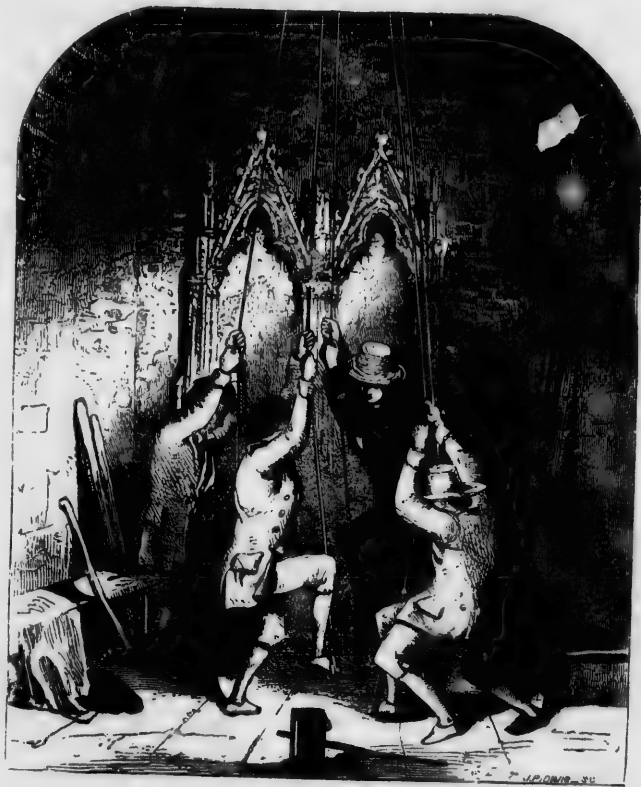
s the mind,
e no more;
and poor,
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se,
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the sin,
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and blood,
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isease;
t of gold;



"Ring out wild bells to the wild sky."

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HEART

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Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVI.

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the
wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things ev'n as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVII.

I WILL not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, tho' with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
'T is held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CVIII.

HEART-AFFLUENCE in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man;
Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its hery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England; not the school-boy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the cold could twine
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine.
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and these mine eyes
Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CIX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years:
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy dearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;
And loved them more, that they were thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Not mine the sweetness or the skill
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CX.

THE churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons thro' the gilded pale:

For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light ;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXI.

HIGH wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou ? some novel power
Sprang up forever at a touch,
And hope could never hope too much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
And tracks of calm from tempest made,
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXII.

'T is held that sorrow makes us wise ;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt who knew thee keen
In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil —
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been :

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has birth,
A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with cries,
And undulations to and fro.

CXIII.

Who loves not Knowledge ? Who shall rail
Against her beauty ? May she mix
With men and prosper ! Who shall fix
Her pillars ? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain,
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons ? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place ;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain ; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child :

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O friend, who comest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

CXIV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now bourgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder gleaming green, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood ; that live their lives

From land to land ; and in my breast
Spring wakens too ; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXV.

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That keener in sweet April wakes,
And meets the year, and gives and takes
The colors of the crescent prime ?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry thus the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret : the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone ;
And that dear voice I once have known
Still speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune dead ;
Less yearning for the friendship fled,
Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVI.

O DAYS and hours, your work is this,
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss ;

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;
And unto meeting when we meet,
Delight a hundred-fold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXVII.

CONTEMPLATE all this work of Time,
The giant laboring in his youth ;
Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day,
Forever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXVIII.

DOORS, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more ; the city sleeps ;
I smell the meadow in the street ;

I hear a chirp of birds ; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn
A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine eye :
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXIX.

I TRUST I have not wasted breath ;
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me ? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action, like the greater ape,
But I was born to other things.

CXX.

SAD Hesper o'er the buried sun,
And ready, thou, to die with him
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done ;

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore,
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird :
Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink ;
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed ; thou art the same.

CXXI.

O, WAST thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law.

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death :

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dew-drop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXII.

THERE rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes thou hast seen !
There where the long street roars, hath
 been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands ;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true ;
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIII.

THAT which we dare invoke to bless ;
Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest doubt ;
He, They, He, All ; with'n, without ;
The Power in darkness whom we guess ;

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;
Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er, when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice, " Believe no more,"
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep :

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd, " I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear :
But that hind clamor made me wise ;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands ;
And out of darkness came the hands
That each thro' nature, moulding men.

CXXIV.

WHATEVER I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would give,
Yes, tho' there often seem'd to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ;
She did but look thro' dimmer eyes ;
Or Love but play'd with gracious lies
Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song ;
And if the words were sweet and strong,
He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXV.

LOVE is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVI.

AND all is well, tho' faith and form
Be sunder'd in the night of fear :
Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rage :
They tremble, the sustaining crags ;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky,
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell ;
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVII.

THE love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when we met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And throned races may degrade ;
Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like new ;
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, at a some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXVIII.

DEAR friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal;
O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, forever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
Love deeper, darklier understood;
Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXIX.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXX.

O LIVING will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and trusts,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O TRUE and tried, so well and long,
Demand not thou a marriage lay;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house; nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
Some thrice three years: they went and
came,
Remade the blood and changed the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid-set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are flown,
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere noon?
She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes,
And then on thee; they meet thy look
And brighten like the star that shook
Betwix the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she grows
Forever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy: full of power;
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent; wearing all that weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride;
She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear:

For I that danced her on my knee,
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,
That shielded all her life from harm,
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
Their pensive tablets round her head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The "wilt thou," answer'd, and again
The "wilt thou" ask'd, till out of twain
Her sweet "I will" has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn;
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering breeze;
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them — maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I gave.
They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased,
Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of Eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warm'd, and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favor'd horses wait;
They rise, but linger; it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,

And how she look'd, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance; — till I retire:
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire;

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapor sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain head,
And o'er the friths that branch and spread
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
And breaking let the splendor fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

MAUD, AND OTHER POEMS.

MAUD.

I.

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers "Death."

II.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
His who had given me life — O father! O God! was it well? —
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted into the ground
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

III.

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had fail'd,
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,
And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worlding wail'd,
And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

IV.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stir.
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper right,
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

V.

Villany somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be maintain'd;
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd.

VI.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them a curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?

VII.

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

VIII.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
Of the golden age — why not? I have neither hope nor trust;
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,
Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows? we are ashes and dust.

MAUD.

9.
Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine,
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard — yes! — but a company forges the wine.

10.
And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,
While chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life.

11.
And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villanous centre-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

12.
When a Mammonite mother knds her babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shewing a hundred thrones.

13.
For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced snub-nosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home. —

14.
What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?
Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

15.
Would there be sorrow for me? there was love in the passionate shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave —
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

16.
I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

17.
There are workmen up at the Hall: they are coming back from abroad;
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire;
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;
I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.

18.
Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all, —

19.
What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.
No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let me alone.
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.
I will bury myself in my books, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

II.

LONG have I sigh'd for a calm : God grant I may find it at last !
It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savor nor salt,
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,
Perfectly beautiful : let it be granted her : where is the fault ?
All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
Dead perfection, no more ; nothing more, if it had not been
For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,
Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,
Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,
From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen.

III.

COLD and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound ;
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong
Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before
Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,
Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long
Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,
But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

IV.

I.

A MILLION emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime
In the little grove where I sit — ah, wherefore cannot I be
Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,
When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land ?

2.

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small !
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite ;
And Jack on his alehouse bench has as many lies as a Czar ;
And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall ;
And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light ;
But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star !

3.

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race ?
I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd ;
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor ;
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face.
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud ;
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

4.

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal ;
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like
A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way :
For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal ;
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower;
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game
That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour;
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame;
However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,
For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,
So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man:
He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor;
The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice.
I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain;
For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.
Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?
Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or with knout?
I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,
Far-off from the clamor of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;
From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise,
Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.
Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will;
You have but fed on the roses, and lain in the lilies of life.

V.

i.

A voice by the cedar-tree,
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

2.

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,

And feet like sunny gems on an English green,
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honor that cannot
die,
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid
and mean,
And myself so languid and base.

3.

Silence, beautiful voice!
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI.

1.

MORNING arises stormy and pale,
No sun, but a wannish glare
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,
And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd
Caught and cuff'd by the gale;
I had fancied it would be fair.

2.

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burn'd
On the blossom'd gable-ends
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet?
And she touch'd my hand with a smile so
sweet
She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

3.

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,
Ready to burst in a color'd flame;
Till at last, when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

4.

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquetish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net,
And fawn at a victor's feet.

5.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

6.

What if tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn,—
What if he had told her yesternorn
How prettily for his own sweet sake
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,

19

And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

7.

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool,
Yea too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool.

8.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and good?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot
mouse,
And my own sad name in corners cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown
Of a world in which I have hardy mixt,
And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

9.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught
By that you swore to withstand?
For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,
That made my tongue so stammer and trip
When I saw the treasured splendor, her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip;

10.

I have play'd with her when a child;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ah well, well, well, I may be beguiled
By some coquetish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile had all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VII.

1.

DID I hear it half in a doze
Long since, I know not where?
Did I dream it an hour ago,
When asleep in this arm-chair?

2.

Men were drinking together,
Drinking and talking of me;
"Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
Will have plenty: so let it be."

3.

Is it an echo of something
Read with a boy's delight,
Visiers nodding together
In some Arabian night?

4.

Strange, that I hear two men,
Somewhere, talking of me;
"Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
Will have plenty: so let it be."

VIII.

SHE came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone;
An angel watching an urn
Wept over her, carved in stone;
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd
To find they were met by my own;
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger
And thicker, until I heard no longer
The snowy-banded, diletante,
Delicate-handed priest intone;
And thought, is it pride, and mused and sigh'd
"No surely, now it cannot be pride."

IX.

I was walking a mile,
More than a mile from the shore,
The sun look'd out with a smile
Betwixt the cloud and the moor,
And riding at set of day
Over the dark moor land,
Rapidly riding far away,
She waved to me with her hand.
There were two at her side,
Something flash'd in the sun,
Down by the hill I saw them ride,
In a moment they were gone:
Like a sudden spark
Struck vainly in the night,
And back returns the dark
With no more hope of light.

X.

1.

SICK, am I sick of a jealous dread?
Was not one of the two at her side
This new-made lord, whose splendor plucks
The slavish hat from the villager's head?
Whose old grandfather has lately died,
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine
Master of half a servile shire,
And left his coal all 'turn'd into gold
To a grandson, first of his noble line,

And him the grace all women desire,
Strong in the power that all men adore,
And simpler and set their voices lower,
And softer as if to a girl, and hold
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
New as his title, built last year,
There amid perky larches and pine,
And over the sullen-purple mine,
(Look at it) pricking a doolney ear.

2.

What, has he found my jewel out?
For one of the two that rode at her side
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be,
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
A bought commission, a waxen face,
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape —
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
At war with myself and a wretched race,
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

3.

Last week came one to the county town,
To preach our poor little army down,
And play the game of the despot kings,
Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well:
This broad-brim'd hawk of holy things,
Whose ear is stuff'd with his cotton, and rings
Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,
This huckster put down war! can he tell
Whether war be a cause or a consequence?
Put down the passions that make earth Hell!
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind
The bitter springs of anger and fear;
Down too, down at your own fireside,
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
For each is at war with mankind.

4.

I wish I could hear again
The chivalrous battle-song
That she warbled alone in her joy!
I might persuade myself then
She would not do herself this great wrong
To take a wanton, dissolute boy
For a man and leader of men.

Ah God, for a man with her head, hand,
Like some of the simple good ones gone
For ever and ever by,
One still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him, what care I,
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat, — one
Who can rule and dare not lie.

6.

And ah for a man to arise in me,
That the man I am may cease to be!

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"She came to the village church,
 And sat by a pillar alone."

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XI.

I.

O LET the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet;
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

II.

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me
Before I am quite quite sure
That there is one to love me;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

XII.

I.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling.

II.

Where was Maud? in our wood;
And I, who else, was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

III.

Birds in our woods sang
Ringing thro' the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
In among the lilies.

IV.

I kiss'd her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

V.

I to cry out on pride
Who have won her favor!
O Maud were sure of Heaven
If loveliness could save her.

VI.

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touch'd the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

VII.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
Were crying and calling to her.
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud,
One is come to woo her.

VIII.

Look, a horse at the door,
And little King Charles is snarling.
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

XIII.

I.

SCORN'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret?
That a calamity hard to be borne?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vexed with his pride!
I past him, I was crossing his lands;
He stood on the path a little aside;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and
white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

II.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
I long'd so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I past he was humming an air,
Stopt, and then with a riding whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonzola me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

III.

Why sits he here in his father's chair?
That old man never comes to his place;
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?
For only once, in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be untrue;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet;
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side;
Her mother has been a thing complete,
However she came to be so allied.
And fair without, faithful within,
Maud to him is nothing akin;
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother,
And heap'd the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,
All, all upon the brother.

XIV.

I.

MAUD has a garden of roses
And lilies fair on a lawn;
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower
And thither I climb'd at dawn
And stood by her garden gate;
A lion ramps at the top,
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

He is claspt by a passion-flower.

2.
Maud's own little oak-room
(Which Maud, like a precious stone
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books,
And her brother lingers late
With a roistering company) looks
Upon Maud's own garden gate :
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my Delight
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost, to
glide,
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down to
my side,
There were but a step to be made.

3.
The fancy flatter'd my mind,
And again seem'd overbold ;
Now I thought that she cared for me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

4.
I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood ;
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn :
But I look'd, and round, all round the house
I beheld
The death-white curtain drawn ;
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain meant but
sleep,
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of the
sleep of death.

XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,
And I make myself such evil cheer,
That if I be dear to some one else,
Then some one else may have much to
fear ;
But if I be dear to some one else,
Then I should be to myself more dear.
Shall I not take care of all that I think,
Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else ?

XVI.

1.
Thus lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his weight ;
And so that he find what he went to seek,
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,

He may stay for a year who has gone for a
week :
But this is the day when I must speak,
And I see my Oread coming down,
O this is the day !
O beautiful creature, what am I
That I dare to look her way ;
Think I may hold dominion sweet,
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,
And dream of her beauty with tender dread,
From the delicate Arab arch of her feet
To the grace that, bright and light as the crest
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
And she knows it not : O, if she knew it,
To know her beauty might half undo it.
I know it the on : bright thing to save
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

2.
What, if she were fasten'd to this fool lord,
Dare I bid her abide by her word ?
Should I love her so well if she
Had given her word to a thing so low ?
Shall I love her as well if she
Can break her word were it even for me ?
I trust that it is not so.

3.
Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,
For I must tell her before we part,
I must tell her, or die.

XVII.

Go not, happy day,
From the shining fields,
Go not, happy day,
Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.
When the happy Yes
Falters from her lips,
Pass and blush the news
O'er the blowing ships,
Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
Blush it thro' the West,
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar-tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap, beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
Blush it thro' the West.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth,

XVIII.

1.
I HAVE led her home, my love, my only friend.
There is none like her, none,
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

2.
None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurel's pattering
talk
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes once
more ;
But even then I heard her close the door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is
gone.

3.
There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious
East,

Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, th' thy limbs have here in-
creased,

Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed
With honey'd rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my
fate,

And made my life a perfumed altar-flame ;
And over whom thy darkness must have
spread

With such delight as theirs of old, thy great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom
she came.

4.
Here will I lie, while these long branches
away,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seem'd far better to be born
To labor and the mattock-harden'd hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought to under-
stand

A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

5.
But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple
girl.

6.
Would die ; for sullen seeming Death may
give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 't is sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass ;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

7.
Not die ; but live a life of truest breath,
And teach true life to fight with mortal
wronga.
O, why should Love, like men in drinking-
songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death ?
Make answer, Maud my bliss.
Maud made my Maud by that long lover's
kiss,

Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this ?
"The dusky strand of Death inwoven here
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself
more dear."

8.
Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay ?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal
white,
And died to live, long as my pulses play ;
But now by this my love has closed her sight
And given false death her hand, and stol'n
away
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies
dwell

Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace affright !
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart and ownest own fare-
well ;

It is but for a little space I go
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night !
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendors that you look so bright ?
I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can
tell,

Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
That seems to draw — but it shall not be so :
Let all be well, be well.

XIX.

1.
HER brother is coming back to-night,
Breaking up my dream of delight.

2.
My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?
I have walk'd awake with Truth.
O when did a morning shine

So rich in atonement as this
For my dark-dawning youth,
Darken'd watching a mother decline
And that dead man at her heart and mine :
For who was left to watch her but I ?
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

3.

I trust that I did not talk
To gentle Maud in our walk
(For often in lonely wanderings
I have cursed him even to lifeless things)
But I trust that I did not talk,
Not touch on her father's sin :
I am sure I did not speak
Of my mother's faded cheek
When it slowly grew so thin,
That I felt she was slowly dying
Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt :
For how often I caught her with eyes all wet,
Shaking her head at her son and sighing
A world of trouble within !

4.

And Maud too, Maud was moved
To speak of the mother she loved
As one scarce less forlorn,
Dying abroad and it seems apart
From him who had ceased to share her heart,
And ever mourning over the feud,
The household Fury sprinkled with blood
By which our houses are torn ;
How strange was what she said,
When only Maud and the brother
Hung over her dying bed, —
That Maud's dark father and mine
Had bound us one to the other,
Betrothed us over their wine
On the day when Maud was born ;
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death,
Mine, mine — our fathers have sworn.

5.

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so sweet :
And none of us thought of a something
beyond,
A desire that awoke in the heart of the child,
As it were a duty done to the tomb,
To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled ;
And I was cursing them and my doom,
And letting a dangerous thought run wild
While often abroad in the fragrant gloom
Of foreign churches, — I see her there,
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer
To be friends, to be reconciled !

6.

But then what a flint is he !
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
I find whenever she touch'd on me
This brother had laugh'd her down,
And at last, when each came home,
He had darken'd into a frown,

Chid her, and forbid her to speak
To me, her friend of the years before ;
And this was what had redd'n'd her cheek,
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

7.

Yet Maud, altho' not blind
To the faults of his heart and mind,
I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
And wishes me to approve him,
And tells me, when she lay
Sick once, with a fear of worse,
That he left his wine and horses and play,
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,
And tended her like a nurse.

8.

Kind ? but the death-bed desire
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar —
Rough but kind ? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud ? that were not amiss.
Well, rough but kind ; why, let it be so :
For shall not Maud have her will ?

9.

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I feel I shall owe you a debt,
That I never can hope to pay ;
And if ever I should forget
That I owe this debt to you
And for your sweet sake to yours ;
O then, what then shall I say ? —
If ever I should forget,
May God make me more wretched
Than ever I have been yet !

10.

So now I have sworn to bury
All this dead body of hate,
I feel so free and so clear
By the loss of that dead weight,
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,
Fantastically merry ;
But that her brother comes, like a blight
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

XX.

1.

STRANGE, that I felt so gay,
Strange, that I tried to-day
To beguile her melancholy ;
The Sultan, as we name him, —
She did not wish to blame him —
But he vex'd her and perplex'd her
With his worldly talk and folly :
Was it gentle to reprove her
For stealing out of view
From a little lazy lover
Who but claims her as his due ?
Or for chilling his caresses
By the coldness of her manners,
Nay, the plainness of her dresses ?

her to speak
the years before;
and reddened her cheek,
on the moor.

7.
blind
heart and mind,
love him,
but kind,
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of worse,
and horses and play,
ner, night and day,
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Hall to-night.

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dresses?

Now I know her but in two,
Nor can pronounce upon it
If one should ask me whether
The habit, hat, and feather,
Or the frock and gypsy bonnet
Be the neater and completer;
For nothing can be sweeter
Than maiden Maud in either.

2.
But to-morrow, if we live,
Our ponderous squire will give
A grand political dinner
To half the squirlings near;
And Maud will wear her jewels,
And the bird of prey will hover,
And the titmouse hope to win her
With his chirrup at her ear.

3.
A grand political dinner
To the men of many acres,
A gathering of the Tory,
A dinner and then a dance
For the maids and marriage-makers,
And every eye but mine will glance
At Maud in all her glory.

4.
For I am not invited,
But, with the Sultan's pardon,
I am all as well delighted,
For I know her own rose-garden,
And mean to linger in it
Till the dancing will be over;
And then, O then, come out to me
For a minute, but for a minute,
Come out to your own true lover,
That your true lover may see
Your glory also, and render
All homage to his own darling,
Queen Maud in all her splendor.

XXI.

RIVULET crossing my ground,
And bringing me down from the Hall
This garden-rose that I found,
Forgetful of Maud and me,
And lost in trouble and moving round
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
And trying to pass to the sea;
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
My Maud has sent it by thee
(If I read her sweet will right)
On a blushing mission to me,
Saying in odor and color, "Ah, be
Among the roses to-night."

XXII.

1.
Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;

And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the roses blown.

2.
For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die.

3.
All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the caseinett jessamine stirr'd
To the dancers dancing in tune;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

4.
I said to the lily, "There is but one
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone?
She is weary of dance and play."
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

5.
I said to the rose, "The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,
"For ever and ever, mine."

6.
And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the
wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

7.
From the meadow your walks have left so
sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradises.

8.
The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white jake-blossom fell into the lake,
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your
sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

9.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with
curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

10.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is
near";
And the white rose weeps, "She is late";
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear";
And the lily whispers, "I wait."

11.

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

XXIII.

1.

"The fault was mine, the fault was mine" —
Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the
hill? —

It is this guilty hand! —
And there rises ever a passionate cry
From underneath in the darkening land —
What is it, that has been done?
O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,
The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising
sun,

The fires of Hell and of Hate;
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a
word,

When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,
He came with the babe-faced lord;
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,
And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,
He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the face,
Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by:
Struck for himself an evil stroke:
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe;
For front to front in an hour we stood,
And a million horrible bellowing echoes
broke

From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,
And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christ-
less code,
That must have life for a blow.

Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.
Was it he lay there with a fading eye?
"The fault was mine," he whisper'd, "fly!"
Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know;
And there rang on a sudden a passionate
cry,
A cry for a brother's blood;
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I
die, till I die.

2.

Is it gone? my pulses beat —
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?
Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.
It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle
rain,
When they should burst and drown with del-
uging storms
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and
lust,
The little hearts that know not how to for-
give:
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee
just,
Strike dead the whole weak race of venom-
ous worms,
That sting each other here in the dust;
We are not worthy to live.

XXIV.

1.

SEE what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairly well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design!

2.

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

3.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow bill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world?

4.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock

h they seem'd to grow.
with a fading eye?
"he whisper'd, "fly!"
the joyous wood
of one that I know;
a sudden a passionate

blood:
heart and my ears, till I

2.
s beat —
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heavens fall in a gentle

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weak race of venom-

here in the dust;
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IV.

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ld?

h a tap

sand,

stand,

and

Of cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand!

5.

Breton, not Briton; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear, —
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving eye,
Flying along the land and the main, —
Why should it look like Maud?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain?

6.

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;
An old song vexes my ear;
But that of Lamech is mine.

7.

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, forever, to part, —
But she, she would love me still;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

8.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye, —
That it should, by being so overwrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been past by!
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought
It is his mother's hair.

9.

Who knows if he be dead?
Whether I need have fled?
Am I guilty of blood?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the sea!
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,
Whatever happen to me!
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
And comfort her tho' I die.

XXV.

COURAGE, poor heart of stone!
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left forever alone:
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone. —
Or if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply:
She is but dead, and the time is at hand
When thou shalt more than die.

XXVI.

1.

O THAT 't were possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

2.

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter
Than anything on earth.

3.

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee;
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be.

4.

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

5.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

6.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendor falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet;
She is singing in the meadow,
And the rivulet at her feet

Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

7.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

8.

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about,
'T is the blot upon the brain
That will show itself without.

9.

Then I rise, the eave-drops fall,
And the yellow vapors choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

10.

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

11.

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

12.

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say "forgive the wrong,"
Or to ask her, "take me sweet,
To the regions of thy rest"?

13.

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,

Hearts with no love for me:
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

XXVII.

1.

DEAD, long dead,
Long dead!
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of passing
feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and clatter,
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is
not so;
To have no peace in the grave, is that not
and?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

2.

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
They cannot even bury a man;
And tho' we paid our tithes in the days that
are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read;
It is that which makes us loud in the world
of the dead;
There is none that does his work, not one;
A touch of their office might have sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill their
church,
As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

3.

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress;
And another, a lord of all things, praying
To his own great self, as I guess;
And another, a statesman there, betraying
His party-secret, fool, to the press;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient, — all for what?
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,
And wheedle a world that loves him not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

4.

Nothing but idiot gabble!
For the prophecy given of old
And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold;
Not let any man think for the public good,

for me :
weep
n deep,
weep, and weep
o thee.

XVII.

1.
ndful of dust,
er my head,
aken with pain,
ave they are thrust,
the street,
horses beat, beat,
ses beat,
d my brain,
the stream of passing
arrying, burying,
nd ringing and clatter,
s all as bad,
d had peace, but it is
the grave, is that not
to and fro,
d men go :
ad man chatter
mad.

Time began,
a man ;
ithes in the days that
ot a prayer was read ;
us loud in the world
his work, not one ;
might have sufficed,
ain would kill their
ill'd their Christ.

obbing,
all things, praying
I guess ;
n there, betraying
n the press ;
cian, blabbing
— all for what ?
n in an empty head,
t loves him not,
he dead.

old
old ;
the public good,

But babble, merely for babble.
For I never whisper'd a private affair
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
No, not to myself in the closet alone,
But I heard it shouted at once from the top
of the house ;

Everything came to be known :
Who told *Aims* we were there ?

5.
Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back
From the wilderness, full of wolves, where
he used to lie ;
He has gather'd the bones for his o'ergrown
whelp to crack ;
Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and
die.

6.
Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the rat ;
I know not whether he came in the Hanover
ship,

But I know that he lies and listens mute
In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes :
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,
Except that now we poison our babes, poor
souls !
It is all used up for that.

7.
Tell him now : she is standing here at my
head ;
Not beautiful now, not even kind ;
He may take her now : for she never speaks
her mind,
But is ever the one thing silent here.
She is not of us, as I divine ;
She comes from another stiller world of the
dead,
Still, not fairer than mine.

8.
But I know where a garden grows,
Fairer than aught in the world beside,
All made up of the lily and rose
That blow by night, when the season is good,
To the sound of dancing music and flutes :
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
And I almost fear they are not roses, but
blood ;

For the keeper was one, so full of pride,
He linkt a dead man there to a spectral
bride ;
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,
Would he have that hole in his side ?

9.
But what will the old man say ?
He laid a cruel snare in a pit
To catch a friend of mine one stormy day :
Yet now I could even weep to think of it ;
For what will the old man say
When he comes to the second corpse in the
pit ?

10.
Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
Then to strike him and lay him low,

That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin ;
But the red life spilt for a private blow—
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
Are scarcely even akin.

II.

O me, why have they not buried me deep
enough ?
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?
Maybe still I am but half-dead ;
Then I cannot be wholly dumb ;
I will cry to the steps above my head,
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will
come
To bury me, bury me
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

XXVIII.

I.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and
fear,
That I come to be grateful at last for a little
thing :
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of
year
When the face of night is fair on the dewy
downs,
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Chari-
oteer
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
That like a silent lightning under the stars
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band
of the blest,
And spoke of a hope for the world in the
coming wars—
"And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble
have rest,
Knowing I tarry for thee," and pointed to
Mars
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the
Lion's breast.

2.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear
delight
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon
eyes so fair,
That had been in a weary world my one thing
bright ;
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my
despair
When I thought that a war would arise in
defence of the right,
That an iron tyranny now should bend or
cease,
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient
height,
Nor Britain's one sole God be the million-
naire :
No more shall commerce be all in all, and
Peace

Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

3.

And as months ran on and rumor of battle grew,
"It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,"
said I
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),
"It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,
That old hysterical mock-disease should die."
And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath
With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

4.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;
And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd!
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar;
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,
And noble thought be freer under the sun,
And the heart of a people beat with one desire;
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress flames
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

5.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a cause,
we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;
It is better to fight for the good, than to rail at the ill;

I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

THE BROOK;

AN IDYL.

"HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to the East

And he for Italy — too late — too late;
One whom the strong sons of the world despise;

For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,

And mellow metres more than cent for cent;
Nor could he understand how money breeds,
Thought it a dead thing; yet himself could make

The thing that is not as the thing that is.
O had he lived! In our school books we say,
Of those that held their heads above the crowd,

They flourish'd then or then; but life in him
Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd
On such a time as goes before the leaf,
When all the wood stands in a mist of green,
And nothing perfect: yet the brook he loved,
For which, in branding summers of Bengal,
Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neigherry

air,
I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,
Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,
To me that loved him; for 'O brook,' he says,

'O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his rhyme,

'Whence come you?' and the brook, why not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorns, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I slow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

"Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,
It has more ivy; there the river; and there
Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

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With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

"But Philip chatter'd more than brook or
bird;
Old Philip; all about the fields you caught
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

"O darling Katie Willows, his one child!
A maiden of our century, yet most meek;
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse;
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand;
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

"Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,
James Willows, of one name and heart with
her.

For here I came, twenty years back, — the
week

Before I parted with poor Edmund; crost
By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam
Beyond it, where the waters marry — crost,
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,
And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The

gate,
Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,
Stuck; and he clamor'd from a casement,
run

To Katie somewhere in the walks below,
'Run, Katie!' Katie never ran: she moved
To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,
A little flutter'd with her eyelids down,
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

"What was it? less of sentiment than
sense

Had Katie: not illiterate; neither one
Who dabbled in the fount of fictive tears,
And nursed by mealy-mouthed philanthro-
pies,

Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

"She told me. She and James had quar-
rel'd. Why?

What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no
cause;

James had no cause: but when I prest the
cause,

I learnt that James had flickering jealousies
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James? I
said.

But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from
mine,

And sketching with her slender-pointed foot
Some figure like a wizard's pentagram

On garden gravel, let my query pass
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd

If James were coming. 'Coming every day,'
She answer'd, 'ever longing to explain,

But evermore her father came across
With some long-winded tale, and broke him

short;
And James departed vext with him and her.'

How could I help her? 'Would I — was it
wrong?'

(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she

spoke)
'O would I take her father for one hour,
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!'

And even while she spoke, I saw where
James

Made towards us, like a wader in the surf,
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-
sweet.

"O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!
For in I went and call'd old Philip out

To show the farm: full willingly he rose:
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling

lanes
Of his wheat suburb, babbling as he went.

He praised his land, his horses, his machines;
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs,

his dogs;
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-

hens;
His pigeons, who in session on their roofs

Approved him, bowing at their own deserts:
Then from the plaintive mother's teat, he took

Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming
each,

And naming those, his friends, for whom
they were:

Then crost the common into Darnley chase
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern

Trinkled the innumerable ear and tail.
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,

He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said:
'That was the four-year-old I sold the

squire.'

And there he told a long, long-winded tale
Of how the squire had seen the colt at grass,

And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd,
And how he sent the bailliff to the farm

To learn the price, and what the price he
ask'd,

And how the bailliff swore that he was mad,
But he stood firm; and so the matter hung:

He gave them line: and five days after that

He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,
Who then and there had offer'd something
more,

But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;
He knew the man; the colt would fetch its
price;

He gave them line: and how by chance at
last

(It might be May or April, he forgot,
The last of April or the first of May)
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,
And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

"Then, while I breathed in sight of haven,
he,

Poor fellow, could he help it? recommenced,
And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantiy, Tallyho,
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,
Arbaces and Phenomenon, and the rest,
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
And with me Philip, talking still; and so
We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,
And following our own shadows thrice as long
As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,
Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content
Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these are
gone,
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund,
sleeps,
Not by the well-known stream and rustic
spire,
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
Of Brunelleschi; sleeps in peace; and he,
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb:
I scraped the lichen from it: Katie walks
By the long wash of Australasian seas
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,
And breathes in converse seasons. All are
gone."

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind

Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook
A tansured head in middle age forlorn,
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low
breath

Of tender air made tremble in the hedge
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings;
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden
near,

Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within:
Then, wondering, ask'd her, "Are you from
the farm?"

"Yes," answer'd she. "Pray stay a little:
pardon me;
What do they call you?" "Katie." "That
were strange.

What surname?" "Willows." "No!"
"That is my name."

"Indeed!" and here he look'd so self-per-
plex,

That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd,
till he

Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his
dream.

Then looking at her; "Too happy, fresh and
fair,

Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best
bloom,

To be the ghost of one who bore your name
About these meadows, twenty years ago."

"Have you not heard?" said Katie, "we
came back.

We bought the farm we tenanted before.
Am I so like her? so they said on board.
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,
My mother, as it seems you did, the days
That most she loves to talk of, come with me.
My brother James is in the harvest-field:
But she—you will be welcome—O, come
in!"

THE LETTERS.

1.

STILL on the tower stood the vane,
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,
I peer'd athwart the chancel pane
And saw the altar cold and bare.
A clog of lead was round my feet,
A band of pain across my brow:
"Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet
Before you hear my marriage vow."

2.

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song
That mock'd the wholesome human heart,
And then we met in wrath and wrong,
We met, but only meant to part.
Full cold my greeting was and dry;
She faintly smiled, she hardly moved;
I saw with half-unconscious eye
She wore the colors I approved,

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3.
 She took the little ivory chest,
 With half a sigh she turn'd the key,
 Then raised her head with lips comprest,
 And gave my letters back to me.
 And gave the trinkets and the rings,
 My gifts, when gifts of mine could please;
 As looks a father on the things
 Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

4.
 She told me all her friends had said;
 I raged against the public liar;
 She talk'd as if her love were dead,
 But in my words were seeds of fire.
 "No more of love; your sex is known:
 I never will be twice deceived.
 Henceforth I trust the man alone,
 The woman cannot be believed.

5.
 "Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell
 (And women's slander is the worst),
 And you, whom once I lov'd so well,
 Thro' you, my life will be accurst."
 I spoke with heart, and heat and force,
 I shook her breast with vague alarms—
 Like torrents from a mountain source
 We rush'd into each other's arms.

6.
 We parted: sweetly gleam'd the star
 And sweet the vapor-braided blue,
 Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,
 As homeward by the church I drew.
 The very graves appear'd to smile,
 So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells;
 "Dark porch," I said, "and silent aisle
 There comes a sound of marriage bells."

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

1.
 Bury the Great Duke
 With an empire's lamentation,
 Let us bury the Great Duke
 To the noise of the mourning of a mighty
 nation,
 Mourning when their leaders fall,
 Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
 And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

2.
 Where shall we lay the man whom we de-
 plore?
 Here, in streaming London's central roar.
 Let the sound of those he wrought for,
 And the feet of those he fought for,
 Echo round his bones forevermore.

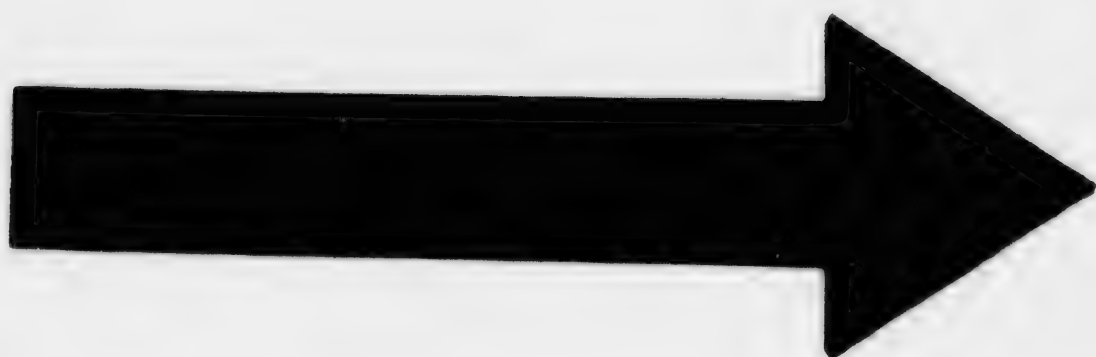
3.
 Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
 As fits an universal woe,

Let the long long procession go,
 And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
 And let the mournful martial music blow;
 The last great Englishman is low.

4.
 Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
 Remembering all his greatness in the Past.
 No more in soldier fashion will he greet
 With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
 O friends, our chief state-oracle is dead:
 Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
 The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
 Whole in himself, a common good.
 Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
 Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
 Our greatest yet with least pretence,
 Great in council and great in war,
 Foremost captain of his time,
 Rich in saving common-sense,
 As the greatest only are,
 In his simplicity sublime.
 O good gray head which all men knew,
 O voice from which their omens all men
 drew,
 O iron nerve to true occasion true,
 O fall'n at length that tower of strength
 Which stood four-square to all the winds that
 blew!

Such was he whom we deplore.
 The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
 The great World-victor's victor will be seen
 no more.

5.
 All is over and done:
 Render thanks to the Giver,
 England, for thy son.
 Let the bell be toll'd.
 Render thanks to the Giver,
 And render him to the mould.
 Under the cross of gold
 That shines over city and river,
 There he shall rest forever
 Among the wise and the bold.
 Let the bell be toll'd:
 And a reverent people behold
 The towering car, the sable steeds:
 Bright let it be with his blazon'd deeds,
 Dark in its funeral fold.
 Let the bell be tolled:
 And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;
 And the sound of the sorrowing anthem
 roll'd
 Thro' the dome of the golden cross;
 And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
 He knew their voices of old.
 For many a time in many a clime
 His captain's-ear has heard them boom
 Bellowing victory, bellowing doom;
 When he with those deep voices wrought,
 Guarding realms and kings from shame;
 With those deep voices our dead captain
 taught
 The tyrant, and asserts his claim
 In that dread sound to the great name,
 Which he has worn so pure of blame,
 In praise and in dispraise the same,



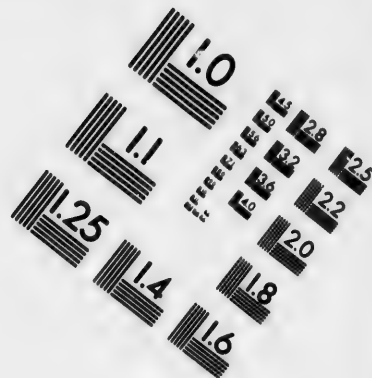
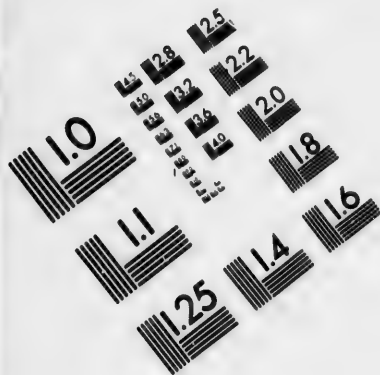
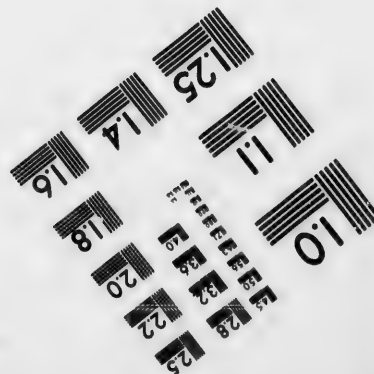
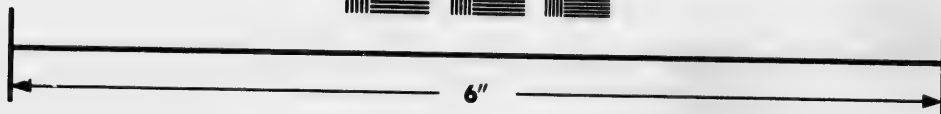
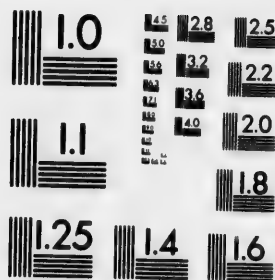


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A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-ringing avenues of song.

6.

Who is he that cometh, like an honor'd
guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier
and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my
rest?
Mighty seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous
man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea;
His foes were thine; he kept us free;
O give him welcome, this is he,
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labor'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Past the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing
wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler
down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd themselves
away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and over-
threw.
So great a soldier taught us there,

What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world's-earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O savior of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

7.

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless
Powers;
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly
set
His Saxon in blown seas and storming
showers,
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it
ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the
soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom
sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there
springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;
For, saying that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of
mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be
just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts,
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
Forever; and whatever tempests lower
Forever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who
spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right;

hearts could do
quake, Waterloo I
er and true,
taint of craven guile,
-coasted isle,
c and the Nile,
at here befall
things divine,
ve thee there at all;
bones are laid by thine I
as let a people's voice

f all human fame,
n they rejoice
np and game,
mander's claim
onor to him,
ame.

are a people yet.
r nobler dreams forget
s mobs and lawless

us here, and roughly
a seas and storming

which to pay the debt
reverence and regret
no fought, and kept it

od, from brute control;
s, guard the eye, the

oble England whole,
ue seed of freedom

their ancient throne,
out of which there

ur temperate kings;
p to save mankind
umbled into dust,
ld for the march of

sane and crowns be

othful overtrust.

your hosts;
sacred coasts,
on the seaward wall;
ur council-hall
tempests lower
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eze with one rebuke
mpling on the right;

Truth-teller was our England's Alfred
named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

8.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outred
All voluptuous garden-roses.

Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he: his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman
pure;

Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory:
And let the land whose hearths he saved from
shame

For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illuminated cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

9.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet un moulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see:
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung:
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and
brain

Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain!
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere.
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain.

And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As lefts a solemn fane:
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will;
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's
ears:

The dark crowd mooves, and there are sobs
and tears:

The black earth yawns: the mortal disap-
pears;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seem'd so great. —
Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in state,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
But speak no more of his renown.
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him.
1832.

THE DAISY.

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O Love, what hours were thine and mine,
In lands of palm and southern pine;
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbula show'd
In ruin, by the mountain road;
How like a gem, beneath the city
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
The torrent vineyard streaming fell
To meet the sun and sunny waters,
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue;
Where, here and there, on sandy beaches
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
Yet present in his natal grove,
Now watching high on mountain cornice,
And steering, now, from a purple cove.

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim ;
Till, in a narrow street and dim,
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,
Not the clipt palm of which they boast ;
But distant color, happy hamlet,
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green ;
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,
Those niched shapes of noble mould,
A princely people's awful princes,
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,
In those long galleries, were ours ;
What drives about the fresh Cascinë,
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain
Remember what a plague of rain ;
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles ;
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory !
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencil'd valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como ; shower and storm and blast
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,
And all was flooded ; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of *Lari Maxime*, all the way.

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on the Lariano crept
To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept ;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake,
The moonlight touching o'er a terrace
One tall Agavé above the lake.

What more ? we took our last adieu.
And up the snowy Splügen drew,
But ere we reach'd the highest summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy.
O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea ;

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold :
Yet here to-night in this dark city,
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
This nurseling of another sky
Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by :

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,
The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
Perchance, to dream you still beside
My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.

COME, when no graver cares employ,
God-father, come and see your boy :
Your presence will be sun in winter,
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,
Who give the Fiend himself his due,
Should eighty thousand college councils
Thunder "Anathema," friend, at you :

Should all our churchmen foam in spite
At you, so careful of the right,
Yet one lay-hearth would give you wel-
come
(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight ;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,
I watch the twilight falling brown
All round a careless-order'd garden
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You 'll have no scandal while you dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine,
And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine :

en music, kept,
 crept
 below the castle
 blind, where we slept;

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 ove the lake.

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WILL.—THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

163

For groves of pine on either hand,
 To break the blast of winter, stand;
 And further on, the hoary Channel
 Tumbles a breaker on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep
 Some ship of battle slowly creep,
 And on thro' zones of light and shadow
 Glimmer 'ray to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
 Which made a selfish war begin;
 Dispute the claims, arrange the chances;
 Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win:

Or whether war's avenging rod
 Shall lash all Europe into blood;
 Till you should turn to dearer matters,
 Dear to the man that is dear to God;

How best to help the slender store,
 How mend the dwellings, of the poor;
 How gain in life, as life advances,
 Valor and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come: the lawn as yet
 Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet;
 But when the wreath of March has blos-
 som'd,
 Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,
 For those are few we hold as dear;
 Nor pay but one, but come for many,
 Many and many a happy year.
 January, 1854.

WILL.

1.

O WELL for him whose will is strong!
 He suffers, but he will not suffer long;
 He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong:
 For him nor moves the loud world's random
 mock,

Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,
 Who seems a promontory of rock,
 That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,
 In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
 Tempest buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

2.

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,
 Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended
 Will,

And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,
 Or seeming-genial venial fault,
 Recurring and suggesting still!
 He seems as one whose footsteps
 Toiling in immeasurable sand,
 And o'er a weary, sultry land,
 Far beneath a blazing vault,
 Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
 The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

1.

HALF a league, half a league,
 Half a league onward,
 All in the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.
 "Forward, the Light Brigade!
 "Charge for the guns!" he said:
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

2.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
 Was there a man dismay'd?
 Not tho' the soldier knew
 Some one had blunder'd:
 Theirs not to make reply,
 Theirs not to reason why,
 Theirs but to do and die,
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

3.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon in front of them,
 Volley'd and thunder'd;
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,
 Boldly they rode and well,
 Into the jaws of Death,
 Into the mouth of Hell
 Rode the six hundred.

4.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
 Flash'd as they turn'd in air,
 Sabring the gunners there,
 Charging an army, while
 All the world wonder'd:
 Plunged in the battery-smoke,
 Right thro' the line they broke;
 Cossack and Russian
 Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
 Shatter'd and sunder'd.
 Then they rode back, but not
 Not the six hundred.

5.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon behind them
 Volley'd and thunder'd;
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,
 While horse and hero fell,
 They that had fought so well
 Came thro' the jaws of Death
 Back from the mouth of Hell,
 All that was left of them,
 Left of six hundred.

6.

When can their glory fade?
 O the wild charge they made!
 All the world wonder'd.
 Honor the charge they made!
 Honor the Light Brigade,
 Noble six hundred!

IDYLS OF THE KING.

"Flos Regum Arthurus."
JOSEPH OF EXETER.

DEDICATION.

THESE to His Memory — since he held them
dear,

Perchance as finding there unconsciously
Some image of himself — I dedicate,
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears —
These Idyls.

And indeed He seems to me
Scarce other than my own ideal knight,
"Who revered his conscience as his king;
Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd to it;
Who loved one only and who claved to her —"
Her — over all whose realms to their last isle,
Commingle with the gloom of imminent war,
The shadow of His loss moved like eclipse,
Darkening the world. We have lost him: he
is gone:

We know him now: all narrow jealousies
Are silent: and we see him as he moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd, wise,
With what sublime repression of himself,
And in what limits, and how tenderly;
Not swaying to this faction or to that;
Not making his high place the lawless perch
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground
For pleasure: but thro' all this tract of years
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which beats upon a throne,
And blackens every blot; for where is he,
Who dares foreshadow for an only son
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than his?
Or how should England dreaming of his sons
Hope more for these than some inheritance
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
Laborious for her people and her poor —
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day —
Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace —
Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,
Beyond all titles, and a household name,
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still endure;
Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,
Remembering all the beauty of that star
Which shone so close beside Thee, that ye
made

One light together, but has past and left
The Crown of lonely splendor.

His love, unseen but felt, foreshadow Thee,
May all love,

The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,
The love of all thy daughters cherish Thee,
The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,
Till God's love set Thee at his side again!

ENID.

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's
court,
A tributary prince of Devon, one
Of that great order of the Table Round,
Had wedded Enid, Yniol's only child,
And loved her, as he loved the light of
Heaven.

And as the light of Heaven varies, now
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night
With moon and trembling stars, so loved
Geraint

To make her beauty vary day by day,
In crimsons and in purples and in gems.
And Enid, but to please her husband's eye,
Who first had found and loved her in a
state

Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him
In some fresh splendor; and the Queen her-
self,

Grateful to Prince Geraint for service done,
Loved her, and often with her own white
hands

Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,
Next after her own self, in all the court.
And Enid loved the Queen, and with true
heart

Adored her, as the stateliest and the best
And loveliest of all women upon earth.
And seeing them so tender and so close,
Long in their common love rejoiced Geraint.
But when a rumor rose about the Queen,
Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,
Though yet there lived no proof, nor yet was
heard

The world's loud whisper breaking into
storm,

Not less Geraint believed it; and there fell
A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,
Thro' that great tenderness to Guinevere,
Had suffered or should suffer any taint
In nature: wherefore going to the king,
He made this pretext, that his princedom lay
Close on the borders of a territory,
Wherein were bandit earls, and crafty
knights,

Assassins, and all flyers from the hand
Of justice, and whatever loathes a law:
And therefore, till the king himself should
please

KING.

ER.

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To cleanse this common sewer of all his
realm,

He craved a fair permission to depart,
And there defend his marches; and the
king

Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,
Allowing it, the prince and Enid rode,
And fifty knights rode with them, to the
shores

Of Severn, and they past to their own land;

Where, thinking, that if ever yet was wife
True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,

He compassed her with sweet observances
And worship, never leaving her, and grew

Forgetful of his promise to the king,
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,

Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,
Forgetful of his glory and his name,

Forgetful of his princedom and its cares.

And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.

And by and by the people, when they met
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,

Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him
As of a prince whose manhood was all gone,

And molten down in mere uxoriousness.

And this she gather'd from the people's
eyes:

This too the women who attired her head,
To please her, dwelling on his boundless
love,

Told Enid, and they saddened her the
more:

And day by day she thought to tell Geraint,
But could not out of bashful delicacy;

While he that watch'd her sadden, was the
more

Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced on a summer morn
(They sleeping each by other) the new sun

Beat through the blindless casement of the
room,

And heated the strong warrior in his dreams;
Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside.

And bared the knotted column of his throat,
The massive square of his heroic breast,

And arms on which the standing muscle
sloped,

As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,
Running too vehemently to break upon it.

And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,
Admiring him, and thought within herself,

Was ever man so grandly made as he?

Then, like a shadow, past the people's talk
And accusation of uxoriousness

Across her mind, and bowing over him,
Low to her own heart piteously, she said:

"O noble breast and all-puissant arms,
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men

Reproach you, saying all your force is gone?
I am the cause because I dare not speak

And tell him what I think and what they
say.

And yet I hate that he should linger here;
I cannot love my lord and not his name.

Far liever had I gird his harness on him,
And ride with him to battle and stand by,

And watch his mightful hand striking great
blows

At caitiffs and at wrongers of the world.
Far better were I laid in the dark earth,

Not hearing any more his noble voice,
Not to be folded more in these dear arms,

And darken'd from the high light in his
eyes,

Than that my lord through me should suffer
shame.

Am I so bold, and could I so stand by,
And see my dear lord wounded in the strife,

Or may be pierced to death before mine
eyes,

And yet not dare to tell him what I think,
And how men slur him, saying all his force

Is melted into mere effeminacy?

O me, I fear that I am no true wife."

Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke,
And the strong passion in her made her
weep

True tears upon his broad and naked breast,
And these awake him, and by gaged mis-
chance

He heard but fragments of her later words,
And that she fear'd she was not a true wife.

And then he thought, "In spite of all my
care,

For all my pains, poor man, for all my
pains,

She is not faithful to me, and I see her
Weeping for some gay knight in Arthur's
hall."

Then tho' he loved and revered her too
much

To dream she could be of foul act,
Right thro' his manful breast darted the pang

That makes a man in the sweet face of her
Whom he loves most, lonely and miserable.

At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out of bed,
And shook his drowsy squire awake and cried,

"My charger and her palfrey," then to her,
"I will ride forth into the wilderness;

For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to win,
I have not fall'n so low as some would wish.

And you, put on your worst and meanest
dress

And ride with me." And Enid ask'd, amazed,
"If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault."

But he, "I charge you, ask not, but obey."

Then she bethought her of a faded silk,
A faded mantle and a faded veil,

And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,
Wherein she kept them folded reverently

With sprigs of summer laid between the
folds,

She took them, and array'd herself therein,
Remembering when first he came on her

Drest in that dress, and how he loved her in it,
And all her foolish fears about the dress,

And all his journey to her, as himself
Had told her, and their coming to the court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before
Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.

There on a day, he sitting high in hall,
Before him came a forester of Dean,

Wet from the woods, with notice of a hart

Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,
First seen that day: these things he told the king.

Then the good king gave order to let blow
His horns for hunting on the morrow morn.
And when the Queen petition'd for his leave
To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.
So with the morning all the court were gone.
But Guinevere lay late into the morn,
Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of her love

For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt;
But rose at last, a single maiden with her,
Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd the wood;

There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd
Waiting to hear the hounds; but heard instead

A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince Geraint,
Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress
Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,
Came quickly flashing thro' the shallow ford

Behind them, and so gallop'd up the knoll.
A purple scarf, at either end whereof
There swung an apple of the purest gold,
Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd up
To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly
In summer suit and silks of holiday.
Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and she,
Sweetly and stately, and with all grace
Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd him:

"Late, late, Sir Prince," she said, "later than we!"

"Yea, noble Queen," he answer'd, "and so late

That I but come like you to see the hunt,
Not join it." "Therefore wait with me," she said;

"For on this little knoll, if anywhere,
There is good chance that we shall hear the hounds;

Here often they break covert at our feet."

And while they listen'd for the distant hunt,
And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,
King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth, there rode

Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf;
Whereof the dwarf lag'd latest, and the knight

Had visor up, and show'd a youthful face,
Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.
And Guinevere, not mindful of his face
In the king's hall, desired his name, and sent
Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf;
Who being vicious, old, and irritable,
And doubling all his master's vice of pride,
Made answer sharply that she should not know.

"Then will I ask it of himself," she said.
"Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not," cried the dwarf;

"Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of him";

And when she put her horse toward the knight,

Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd
Indignant to the Queen; at which Geraint
Exclaiming, "Surely I will learn the name,"
Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of him,

Who answer'd as before; and when the Prince
Had put his horse in motion toward the knight,
Struck at him with his whip, and cut his cheek.

The Prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,
Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive hand
Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him:
But he, from his exceeding manfulness
And pure nobility of temperament,
Wroth to be wroth at such a worm, refrain'd
From ev'n a word, and so returning, said:

"I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,
Done in your maiden's person to yourself;
And I will track this vermin to their earths:
For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt
To find, at some place I shall come at, arms
On loan, or else for pledge; and, being found,
Then will I fight him, and will break his pride,
And on the third day will again be here,
So that I be not fall'n in fight. Farewell."

"Farewell, fair Prince," answer'd the stately Queen.

"Be prosperous in this journey, as in all;
And may you light on all things that you love,
And live to wed with her whom first you love:

But ere you wed with any, bring your bride,
And I, were she the daughter of a king,
Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the hedge,
Will clothe her for her bridal like the sun."

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that he heard

The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,
A little vex'd at losing of the hunt,
A little at the vile occasion, rode,
By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy glade
And valley, with fixt eye, following the three.
At last they issued from the world of wood,
And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,
And show'd themselves against the sky, and sank.

And thither came Geraint, and underneath
Beheld the long street of a little town
In a long valley, on one side of which,
White from the mason's hand, a fortress rose:
And on one side a castle in decay,
Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry ravine:
And out of town and valley came a noise
As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed
Brawling, or like a clamor of the rocks
At distance, ere they settle for the night.

And onward to the fortress rode the three,
And enter'd, and were lost behind the walls.
"So," thought Geraint, "I have track'd
him to his earth."

And down the long street, riding wearily,
Found every hostel full, and everywhere

his whip, and she return'd
Queen; at which Geraint
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et, riding wearily,
, and everywhere

Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot hiss
And bustling whistle of the youth who scour'd
His master's armor; and of such a one
He ask'd, "What means the tumult in the
town?"

Who told him, scouring still, "The sparrow-
hawk!"

Then riding close behind an ancient churl,
Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,
Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,
Ask'd yet once more what meant the hubbub
here?

Who answer'd gruffly, "Ugh! the sparrow-
hawk."

Then, riding further past an armorer's,
Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above his
work,

Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,
He put the selfsame query, but the man
Not turning round, nor looking at him, said:
"Friend, he that labors for the sparrow-hawk
Has little time for idle questioners."

Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden spleen:
"A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-hawk!
Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck
him dead!

Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg
The murmur of the world! What is it to me?
O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,
Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks!
Speak, if you be not like the rest, hawk-
mad,

Where can I get me harborage for the night?
And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy?
Speak!

At this the armorer turning all amazed
And seeing one so gay in purple silks,
Came forward with the helmet yet in hand
And answer'd, "Pardon me, O stranger
knight;

We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,
And there is scanty time for half the work.
Arms? truth! I know not: all are wanted
here,

Harborage? truth, good truth, I know not,
save,

It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge
Yonder." He spoke and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,
Across the bridge that spann'd the dry ravine.
There musing at the hoary-headed Earl,
(His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,
Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and said:
"Whither, fair son?" to whom Geraint re-
plied,

"O friend, I seek a harborage for the night."
Then Yniol, "Enter therefore and partake
The slender entertainment of a house
Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd."

"Thanks, venerable friend, replied Geraint;
"So that you do not serve me sparrow-hawks
For supper, I will enter, I will eat
With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast."
Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed
Earl,

And answer'd, "Graver cause than yours is
mine

To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-
hawk:

But in, go in; for, save yourself desire it,
We will not touch upon him ev'n in jest."

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,
His charger trampling many a prickly star
Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.
He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.
Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed with
fern:

And here had fall'n a great part of a tower,
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,
And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers:
And high above a piece of turret stair,
Worn by the feet that now were silent,
wound

Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms.
And suck'd the joining of the stones, and
look'd

A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang
Clear thro' the open casement of the Hall,
Singing: and as the sweet voice of a bird,
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is
That sings so delicately clear, and make

Conjecture of the plumage and the form;
So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint;
And made him like a man abroad at morn
When first the liquid note beloved of men
Comes flying over many a windy wave
To Britain, and in April suddenly
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green
and red,

And he suspends his converse with a friend,
Or it may be the labor of his hands,
To think or say, "there is the nightingale";
So fared it with Geraint, who thought and
said,

"Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for
me."

It chanced the song that Enid sang was
one
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang:

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and low-
er the proud;
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm,
and cloud;

Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile
or frown;
With that wild wheel we go not up or down;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

"Smile and we smile, the lords of many
lands:
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own
hands;

For man is man and master of his fate.

"Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring
crowd;
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the
cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate."

"Hark, by the bird's song you may learn
the nest."
Said Yniol; "Enter quickly." Entering
then,

Right o'er a mound of newly-fallen stones,
The dusty-rafter'd many-cobweb'd Hall,
He found an ancient dame in dim brocade:
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-white,
That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,
Her daughter. In a moment thought Geraint,
"Here by God's rood is the one maid for
me."

But none spake word except the hoary Earl:
"Enid, the good knight's horse stands in the
court;

Take him to stall, and give him corn, and
then

Go to the town and buy us flesh and wine:
And we will make us merry as we may.
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great."

He spake: the Prince, as Enid past him
fain

To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught
His purple scarf, and held, and said "For-
bear!

Rest! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O my
Son,
Endures not that her guest should serve him-
self."

And reverencing the custom of the house
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall;
And after went her way across the bridge,
And reach'd the town, and while the Prince
and Earl

Yet spoke together, came again with one,
A youth, that following with a costrel bore
The means of goodly welcome, flesh and
wine.

And Enid brought sweet cakes to make them
cheer,

And in her veil enfolded, manchet bread.
And then, because their hall must also serve
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and spread the
board,

And stood behind, and waited on the three.
And seeing her so sweet and serviceable,
Geraint had longing in him evermore
To stoop and kiss the tender little thumb,
That crost the trencher as she laid it down:
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,
For now the wine made summer in his veins,
Let his eye rove in following, or rest
On Enid at her lowly hand maid-work,
Now here, now there, about the dusky hall:
Then suddenly address the hoary Earl.

"Fair Host and Earl, I pray your courtesy:

This sparrow-hawk, what is he, tell me of
him.

His name? but no, good faith, I will not
have it:

For if he be the knight whom late I saw
Ride into that new fortress by your town,
White from the mason's hand, then have I
sworn

From his own lips to have it — I am Geraint
Of Devon — for this morning when the
Queen

Sent her own maiden to demand the name,
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen thing,
Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd
Indignant to the Queen; and then I swore
That I would track this caitiff to his hold,
And fight and break his pride, and have it of
him.

And all unarm'd I rode, and thought to find
Arms in your town, where all the men are
mad;

They take the rustic murmur of their bourg
For the great wave that echoes round the
world;

They would not hear me speak: but if you
know

Where I can light on arms, or if yourself
Should have them, tell me, seeing I have
sworn

That I will break his pride and learn his name,
Avenging this great insult done the Queen."

Then cried Earl Yniol: "Art thou he in-
deed,

Geraint, a name far-sounded among men
For noble deeds? and truly I, when first
I saw you moving by me on the bridge,
Felt you were somewhat, yea and by your
state

And presence might have guess'd you one of
those

That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.

Nor speak I now from foolish flattery;

For this dear child hath often heard me praise

Your feats of arms, and often when I passed

Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to hear;

So grateful is the noise of noble deeds

To noble hearts who see but acts of wrong:

O never yet had woman such a pair

Of suitors as this maiden; first Limours,

A creature wholly given to brawls and wine,

Drunk even when he wo'd; and be he
dead

I know not, but he passed to the wild land.

The second was your foe, the sparrow-hawk,

My curse, my nephew, — I will not let his
name

Slip from my lips if I can help it, — he,

When I that knew him fierce and turbulent

Refused her to him, then his pride awoke;

And since the proud man often is the mean,

He sowed a slander in the common ear,

Affirming that his father left him gold,

And in my charge, which was not render'd
to him;

Bribed with large promises the men who
served

About my person, the more easily

what is he, tell me of
no, good faith, I will not

knight whom late I saw
in fortress by your town,
in Mason's hand, then have I

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Because my means were somewhat broken
into

Thro' open doors and hospitality;

Raised my own town against me in the night

Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my house;

From mine own earldom foully ousted me;

Built that new fort to overawe my friends,

For truly there are those who love me yet;

And keeps me in this ruinous castle here,

Where doubtless he would put me soon to

death,

But that his pride too much despises me:

And I myself sometimes despise myself:

For I have let men be, and have their way;

And much too gentle, have not used my power:

Nor know I whether I be very base

Or very foolish, whether very wise

Or very foolish; only this I know,

That whatsoever evil happen to me,

I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,

But can endure it all most patiently."

"Well said, true heart," replied Geraint,

"but arms:

That if, as I suppose, your nephew fights

In next day's tourney I may break his pride."

And Yniol answer'd: "Arms, indeed, but old

And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Geraint,

Are mine, and therefore at your asking, yours,

But in this tournament can no man tilt,

Except the lady he loves best be there.

Two forks are fixt into the meadow ground,

And over these is laid a silver wand,

And over that is placed the sparrow-hawk,

The prize of beauty for the fairest there.

And this, what knight soever be in field

Lays claim to for the lady at his side,

And tilts with my good nephew thereupon,

Who being apt at arms and big of bone

Has ever won it for the lady with him,

And toppling over all antagonism

Has earn'd himself the name of sparrow-

hawk.

But you, that have no lady, cannot fight."

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright re-

plied,

Leaning a little toward him, "Your leave!

Let me lay lance in rest, O noble host,

For this dear child, because I never saw,

Tho' having seen all beauties of our time,

Nor can see elsewhere, anything so fair.

And if I fall her name will yet remain

Untarnish'd as before; but if I live,

So aid me Heaven when at mine uttermost,

As I will make her truly my true wife."

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart

Danced in his bosom, seeing better days,

And looking round he saw not Enid there,

(Who hearing her own name had slipt away)

But that old dame, to whom full tenderly

And fondling all her hand in his he said,

"Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,

And best by her that bore her understood.

Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest

Tell her, and prove her heart toward the

Prince."

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl, and she
With frequent smile and nod departing
found,

Half disarray'd as to her rest, the girl;
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek, and
then

On either shining shoulder laid a hand,
And kept her off and gazed upon her face,
And told her all their converse in the hall,

Proving her heart; but never light and shade
Cours'd one another more on open ground
Beneath a troubled heaven, than red and
pale

Across the face of Enid hearing her;
Whilst slowly falling as a scale that falls,
When weight is added only grain by grain,

Sank her sweet head upon her gentle breast;
Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it;

So moving without answer to her rest
She found no rest, and ever fail'd to draw
The quiet night into her blood, but lay

Contemplating her own unworthiness:
And when the pale and bloodless east began
To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised

Her mother too, and hand in hand they
moved
Down to the meadow where the jousts were
held,

And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and when
Geraint

Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,
He felt, were she the prize of bodily force,
Himself beyond the rest, pushing could move

The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms
Were on his princely person, but thro' these
Princelike his bearing shone; and errant
knights

And ladies came, and by and by the town
Flow'd in, and settling circled all the lists.

And there they fixt the forks into the ground,
And over these they placed a silver wand,
And over that a golden sparrow-hawk.

Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet blown,
Spake to the lady with him and proclaim'd,
"Advance and take as fairest of the fair,

For I these two years past have won it for
thee,
The prize of beauty." Loudly spake the
Prince,

"Forbear: there is a worthier," and the
knight

With some surprise and thrice as much dis-
dain

Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his face
Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at Yule,
So burnt he was with passion, crying out,

"Do battle for it then," no more; and thrice
They clash'd together, and thrice they brake
their spears.

Then each, dishors'd and drawing, lash'd at
each

So often, and with such blows, that all the
crowd

Wonder'd, and now and then from distant
walls

There came a clapping as of phantom hands.
So twice they fought, and twice they breathed,
and still

The dew of their great labor, and the blood
Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd their
force.

But either's force was match'd till Yniol's cry,
"Remember that great insult done the
Queen,"

Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade
aloft,

And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit the
bone,

And fell'd him, and set foot upon his breast,
And said, "Thy name?" To whom the
fallen man

Made answer, groaning, "Edym, son of
Nudd!

Asbamed am I that I should tell it thee.
My pride is broken: men have seen my fall."

"Then, Edym, son of Nudd," replied Geraint,

"These two things shalt thou do, or else
thou diest.

First, thou thyself, thy lady and thy dwarf,
Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and being there,

Crave pardon for that insult done the Queen,
And shalt abide her judgment on it: next,

Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy kin.
These two things shalt thou do, or thou shalt
die."

And Edym answer'd, "These things will I
do,

For I have never yet been overthrown,
And thou hast overthrown me, and my pride

Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall!"

And rising up, he rode to Arthur's court,
And there the Queen forgave him easily.

And being young, he changed himself, and
grew

To hate the sin that seem'd so like his own,
Of Modred, Arthur's nephew, and fell at last

In the great battle fighting for the king.

But when the third day from the hunting-
morn

Made a low splendor in the world, and wings
Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay

With her fair head in the dim-yellow light,
Among the dancing shadows of the birds,

Woke and bethought her of her promise given
No later than last eve to Prince Geraint —

So bent he seem'd on going the third day,
He would not leave her, till her promise

given —
To ride with him this morning to the court,

And there be made known to the stately
Queen,

And there be wedded with all ceremony.
At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,

And thought it never yet had look'd so mean.
For as a leaf in mid-November is

To what it was in mid-October, seem'd
The dress that now she look'd on to the dress

She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint.
And still she look'd, and still the terror grew

Of that strange bright and dreadful thing, a
court,

All staring at her in her faded silk;
And softly to her own sweet heart she said:

"This noble Prince who won our earldom
back,

So splendid in his acts and his attire,
Sweet heaven! how much I shall discredit
him!

Would he could tarry with us here awhile!
But being so beholden to the Prince

It were but little grace in any of us,
Bent as he seem'd on going this third day,

To seek a second favor at his hands,
Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,

Myself would work eye dim, and finger lame,
Far liefer than so much discredit him."

And Enid fell in longing for a dress
All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a costly

gift
Of her good mother, given her on the night

Before her birthday, three sad years ago,
That night of fire, when Edym sack'd their

house,
And scatter'd all they had to all the winds:

For while the mother show'd it, and the
two

Were turning and admiring it, the work
To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry

That Edym's men were on them, and they
fled

With little save the jewels they had on,
Which being sold and sold had bought them

bread:
And Edym's men had caught them in their

flight,
And placed them in this ruin; and she wish'd

The Prince had found her in her ancient
home;

Then let her fancy flit across the past,
And roam the goodly places that she knew;

And last bethought her how she used to
watch,

Near that old home, a pool of golden carp;
And one was patch'd and blurr'd and lustre-

less
Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool;

And half asleep she made comparison
Of that and these to her own faded self

And the gay court, and fell asleep again;
And dreamt herself was such a faded form

Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool;
But this was in the garden of a king;

And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she knew
That all was bright; that all about were birds

Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work;
That all the turf was rich in plots that look'd

Each like a garnet or a turkis in it;
And lords and ladies of the high court went

In silver tissue talking things of state;
And children of the king in cloth of gold

Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down the
walks;

And while she thought "they will not see
me," came

A stately queen whose name was Guinevere,
And all the children in their cloth of gold

Ran to her, crying, "If we have fish at all

her faded silk :
 her sweet heart she said :
 who won our earldom
 and his attire.
 much I shall discredit

with us here awhile !
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me was Guinevere,
 eir cloth of gold
 ve have fish at all

Let them be gold : and charge the gardeners
 now

To pick the faded creature from the pool,
 And cast it on the mixen that it die."
 And therewithal one came and seized on her,
 And Enid started waking, with her heart
 All overshadow'd by the foolish dream,
 And lo ! it was her mother grasping her
 To get her well awake ; and in her hand
 A suit of bright apparel, which she laid
 Flat on the couch, and spoke exultingly :

" See here, my child, how fresh the colors
 look,
 How fast they hold, like colors of a shell
 That keeps the wear and polish of the wave.
 Why not ? it never yet was worn, I trow ;
 Look on it, child, and tell me if you know
 it."

And Enid look'd, but all confused at first,
 Could scarce divide it from her foolish dream,
 Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,
 And answer'd, " Yea, I know it ; your good
 gift,

So sadly lost on that unhappy night ;
 Your own good gift ! " " Yea, surely," said
 the dame,

" And gladly given again this happy morn.
 For when the jousts were ended yesterday,
 Went Yniol thro' the town, and everywhere
 He found the sack and plunder of our house
 All scatter'd thro' the houses of the town :
 And gave command that all which once was
 ours,

Should now be ours again : and yester-eve,
 While you were talking sweetly with your
 Prince,

Came one with this and laid it in my hand,
 For love or fear, or seeking favor of us,
 Because we have our earldom back again.
 And yester-eve I would not tell you of it,
 But kept it for a sweet surprise at morn.

Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise ?
 For I myself unwillingly have worn
 My faded suit, as you, my child, have yours,
 And howsoever patient, Yniol his.
 Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly house,
 With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,
 And page, and maid, and squire, and senes-
 chal,

And pastime, both of hawk and hound, and all

That appertains to noble maintenance.
 Yea, and he brought me to a goodly house ;
 But since our fortune slept from sun to shade,
 And all thro' that young traitor, cruel need
 Constrain'd us, but a better time has come ;
 So clothe yourself in this, that better fits
 Our mended fortunes and a Prince's bride :

For tho' you won the prize of fairest fair,
 And tho' I heard him call you fairest fair,
 Let never maiden think, however fair,
 She is not fairer in new clothes than old.
 And should some great court-lady say, the
 Prince

Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the hedge,
 And like a madman brought her to the court,

Then were you shamed, and worse, might
 shame the Prince

To whom we are beholden ; but I know,
 When my dear child is set forth at her best,
 That neither court nor country, tho' they
 sought
 Thro' all the provinces like those of old
 That lighted on Queen Esther, has her
 match "

Here ceased the kindly mother out of
 breath ;
 And Enid listen'd brightening as she lay ;
 Then, as the white and glittering star of
 morn

Parts from a bank of snow, and by and by
 Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose,
 And left her maiden couch, and robed her-
 self,

Help'd by the mother's careful hand and
 eye,
 Without a mirror, in the gorgeous gown ;
 Who, after, turn'd her daughter round, and
 said,

She never yet had seen her half so fair ;
 And call'd her like that maiden in the tale,
 Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of
 flowers,

And sweeter than the bride of Cassivelaun,
 Flur, for whose love the Roman Cæsar first
 Invaded Britain, " but we beat him back,
 As this great Prince invaded us, and we
 Not beat him back, but welcomed him with
 joy.

And I can scarcely ride with you to court,
 For old am I, and rough the ways and wild ;
 But Enid goes, and I full oft shall dream
 I see my princess as I see her now,
 Cloth'd with my gift, and gay among the
 gay."

But whilst the women thus rejoiced, Ge-
 raint
 Woke where he slept in the high hall, and
 call'd

For Enid, and when Yniol made report
 Of that good mother making Enid gay
 In such apparel as might well besem
 His princess, or indeed the stately queen,
 He answer'd, " Earl, entreat her by my love,
 Albeit I give no reason but my wish,
 That she ride with me in her faded silk."
 Yniol with that hard message went ; it fell,
 Like flaws in summer laying lusty corn :
 For Enid, all abash'd, she knew not why,
 Dared not to glance at her good mother's
 face,

But silently, in all obedience,
 Her mother silent too, nor helping her,
 Laid from her limbs the costly-broider'd
 gift,

And robed them in her ancient suit again,
 And so descended. Never man rejoiced
 More than Geraint to greet her thus attired ;
 And glancing all at once as keenly at her,
 As careful robins eye the delfer's toil,
 Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall,
 But rested with her sweet face satisfied ;

Then seeing cloud upon the mother's brow,
Hef by both hands he caught, and sweetly
said :

"O my new mother, be not wroth or
grieved
At your new son, for my petition to her.
When late I left Caerleon, our great Queen,
In words whose echo lasts, they were so
sweet,
Made promise that whatever bride I brought,
Herself would clothe her like the sun in
Heaven.

Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd hold,
Beholding one so bright in dark estate,
I vow'd that could I gain her, our kind
Queen,

No hand but hers, should make your Enid
burst
Sunlike from cloud — and likewise thought
perhaps,

That service done so graciously would bind
The two together ; for I wish the two
To love each other : how should Enid find
A nobler friend ? Another thought I had ;
I came among you here so suddenly,
That tho' her gentle presence at the lists
Might well have served for proof that I was
loved.

I doubted whether filial tenderness,
Or easy nature, did not let itself
Be moulded by your wishes for her weal ;
Or whether some false sense in her own self
Of my contrasting brightness, overbore
Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall ;
And such a sense might make her long for
court

And all its dangerous glories : and I thought,
That could I somehow prove such force in
her

Link'd with such love for me, that at a word
(No reason given her) she could cast aside
A splendor dear to women, new to her,
And therefore dearer ; or if not so new,
Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power
Of intermitted custom ; then I felt
That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and flows,
Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I do rest,
A prophet certain of my prophecy,
That never shadow of mistrust can cross
Between us. Grant me pardon for my
thoughts :

And for my strange petition I will make
Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,
When your fair child shall wear your costly
gift

Beside your own warm hearth, with, on her
knees,
Who knows ? another gift of the high God.
Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to lisp you
thanks."

He spoke : the mother smiled, but half in
tears,
Then brought a mantle down and wrapt her
in it,
And clapt and kiss'd her, and they rode
away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere had
climb'd
The giant tower, from whose high crest, they
say,

Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,
And white sails flying on the yellow sea ;
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea
Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale of
Usk,

By the flat meadow, till she saw them come ;
And then descending met them at the gates,
Embraced her with all welcome as a friend,
And did her honor as the Prince's bride,
And clothed her for her bridal like the sun ;
And all that week was old Caerleon gay.
For by the hands of Dubric, the high saint,
They twain were wedded with all ceremony.

And this was on the last year's Whitsun-
tide.

But Enid ever kept the faded silk,
Remembering how first he came on her,
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her
in it,

And all the foolish fears about the dress,
And all his journey toward her, as himself
Had told her, and their coming to the court.

And now this morning when he said to her,
"Put on your worst and meanest dress," she
found

And took it, and array'd herself therein.

O purblind race of miserable men,
How many among us at this very hour
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves,
By taking true for false, or false for true ;
Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this world
Groping, how many, until we pass and reach
That other, where we see as we are seen !

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing forth
That morning, when they both had got to
horse,

Perhaps because he loved her passionately,
And felt that tempest brooding round his
heart,

Which, if he spoke at all, would break per-
force

Upon a head so dear in thunder, said :
"Not at my side ! I charge you ride before,
Ever a good way on before ; and this
I charge you, on your duty as a wife,
Whatever happens, not to speak to me,
No, not a word !" and Enid was aghast ;
And forth they rode, but scarce three paces
on,

When crying out, "Effeminate as I am,
I will not fight my way with gilded arms,
All shall be iron" ; he loosed a mighty purse,
Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward the
squire.

So the last sight that Enid had of home
Was all the marble threshold flashing, strown
With gold and scatter'd coinage, and the
squire

Chafing his shoulder ; then he cried again,
"To the wilds !" and Enid leading down
the tracks

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Thro' which he bade her lead him on, they

past

The marches, and by bandit-haunted holds,

Gray swamps and pools, waste places of the

hern,

And wildernesses, perilous paths, they rode :

Round was their pace at first, but slacken'd

soon :

A stranger meeting them had surely thought,

They rode so slowly and they look'd so pale,

That each had suffer'd some exceeding wrong.

For he was ever saying to himself,

" O I that wasted time to tend upon her,

To compass her with sweet observances,

To dress her beautifully and keep her true " —

And there he broke the sentence in his heart

Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue

May break it, when his passion masters him.

And she was ever praying the sweet heavens

To save her dear lord whole from any wound.

And ever in her mind she cast about

For that unnoticed failing in herself,

Which made him look so cloudy and so cold :

Till the great plover's human whistle amazed

Her heart, and glancing round the waste she

fear'd

In every wavering brake an ambuscade.

Then thought again " If there be such in me,

I might amend it by the grace of heaven,

If he would only speak and tell me of it."

But when the fourth part of the day was

gone,

Then Enid was aware of three tall knights

On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a rock

In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs all ;

And heard one crying to his fellow, " Look,

Here comes a laggard hanging down his head,

Who seems no bolder than a beaten hound ;

Come, we will slay him and will have his

horse

And armor, and his damsel shall be ours."

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart, and said :

" I will go back a little to my lord,

And I will tell him all their caitiff talk ;

For, be he wroth even to slaying me,

Far liefer by his dear hand had I die,

Than that my lord should suffer loss or

shame."

Then she went back some paces of return,

Met his full frown timidly firm, and said :

" My lord, I saw three bandits by the rock

Waiting to fall on you, and heard them boast

That they would slay you, and possess your

horse

And armor, and your damsel should be theirs."

He made a wrathful answer. " Did I wish

Your warning or your silence ? one command

I laid upon you, not to speak to me,

And thus you keep it ! Well then, look —

for now,

Whether you wish me victory or defeat,

Long for my life, or hunger for my death,

Yourself shall see my vigor is not lost."

Then Enid waited pale and sorrowful,

And down upon him bare the bandit three.

And at the midmost charging, Prince Geraint

Drave the long spear a cubit thro' his breast

And out beyond ; and then against his brace

Of comrades, each of whom had broken on

him

A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,

Swung from his brand a windy buffet out

Once, twice, to right, to left, and stunn'd the

twin

Or slew them, and dismounting like a man

That skins the wild beast after slaying him,

Strip'd from the three dead wolves of woman

born

The three gay suits of armor which they wore,

And let the bodies lie, but bound the suits

Of armor on their horses, each on each,

And tied the bridle reins of all the three

Together, and said to her, " Drive them on

Before you " ; and drove them thro' the

gate.

He follow'd nearer : ruth began to work

Against his anger in him, while he watch'd

The being he loved best in all the world,

With difficulty in mild obedience

Driving them on : he fain had spoken to her,

And loosed in words of sudden fire the wrath

And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him all

within ;

But evermore it seem'd an easier thing

At once without remorse to strike her dead,

Than to cry " Halt," and to her own bright

face

Accuse her of the least immodesty :

And thus tongue-tied, it made him wroth the

more

That she *could* speak whom his own ear had

heard

Call herself false : and suffering thus he made

Minutes an age : but in scarce longer time

Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,

Before he turn to fall seaward again,

Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold

In the first shallow shade of a deep wood,

Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted oaks,

Three other horsemen waiting, wholly arm'd,

Whereof one seem'd far larger than her lord,

And shook her pulses, crying, " Look, a

prize !

Three horses and three goodly suits of arms,

And all in charge of whom ? a girl : set on."

" Nay," said the second, " yonder comes a

knicht."

The third, " A craven ! how he hangs his

head."

The giant answer'd merrily, " Yea, but one ?

Wait here, and when he passes fall upon

him."

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and said,

" I will abide the coming of my lord,

And I will tell him all their villany.

My lord is weary with the fight before,

And they will fall upon him unawares.

I needs must disobey him for his good ;

How should I dare obey him to his harm ?

Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill me
for it,
I save a life dearer to me than mine."

And she abode his coming, and said to him
With timid firmness, "Have I leave to
speak?"

He said, "You take it, speaking," and she
spoke.

"There lurk three villains yonder in the
wood,
And each of them is wholly arm'd, and one
is larger-limb'd than you are, and they say
That they will fall upon you while you pass."

To which he flung a wrathful answer back:
"And if there were an hundred in the wood,
And every man were larger-limb'd than I,
And all at once should sally out upon me,
I swear it would not ruffle me so much
As you that not obey me. Stand aside,
And if I fall, cleave to the better man."

And Enid stood aside to wait the event,
Nor dare to watch the combat, only breathe
Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a breath.
And he, she dreaded most, bare down upon
him.

Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd; but Geraint's,
A little in the late encounter strain'd,
Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corselet home,
And then brake short, and down his enemy
roll'd

And there lay still; as he that tells the tale,
Saw once a great piece of a promontory,
That had a sapling growing on it, slip
From the long shore-cliff's windy walls to the
beach,

And there lie still, and yet the sapling grew:
So lay the man transfixt. His craven pair
Of comrades, making slowlier at the Prince,
When now they saw their bulwark fallen,
stood;

On whom the victor, to confound them more,
Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry; for as one,
That listens near a torrent mountain-brook,
All thro' the crash of the near cataract hears
The drumming thunder of the huger fall
At distance, were the soldiers wont to hear
His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,
And foemen scared, like that false pair who
turn'd

Flying, but, overtaken, died the death
Themselves had wrought on many an inno-
cent.

Theon Geraint, dismounting, pick'd the
lance
That pleased him best, and drew from those
dead wolves
Their gay suits of armor, each from
each,
And bound them on their horses, each on
each,
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three

Together, and said to her, "Drive them on
Before you," and she drove them thro' the
wood.

He follow'd nearer still; the pain she
had

To keep them in the wild ways of the wood,
Two sets of three laden with jingling arms,
Together, served a little to disedge
The sharpness of that pain about her heart;
And they themselves, like creatures gently
born

But into bad hands fall'n, and now so long
By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light ears,
and felt

Her low firm voice and tender government.

So thro' the green gloom of the wood they
past,

And issuing under open heavens beheld
A little town with towers, upon a rock,
And close beneath, a meadow gemlike chased
In the brown wild, and mowers mowing in it:
And down a rocky pathway from the place
There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in his
hand

Bare victual for the mowers; and Geraint
Had ruth again on Enid looking pale;
Then, moving downward to the meadow
ground,

He, when the fair-hair'd youth came by him,
said,

"Friend, let her eat; the damsel is so faint."
"Yea, willingly," replied the youth; "and
you,

My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is coarse,
And only meet for mowers"; then set down
His basket, and dismounting on the sward
They let the horses graze, and ate them-
selves.

And Enid took a little delicately,
Less having stomach for it than desire
To close with her lord's pleasure; but
Geraint

Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,
And when he found all empty, was amazed:
And "Boy," said he, "I have eaten all, but
take

A horse and arms for guerdon; choose the
best."

He, reddening in extremity of delight,
"My lord, you overpay me fifty fold."
"You will be all the wealthier," cried the
Prince.

"I take it as free gift, then," said the boy,
"Not guerdon; for myself can easily,
While your good damsel rests, return, and
fetch

Fresh victual for these mowers of our Earl;
For these are his, and all the field is his,
And I myself am his; and I will tell him
How great a man you are; he loves to know
When men of mark are in his territory:
And he will have you to his palace here.
And serve you costlier than with mowers'
fare."

Then said Geraint, "I wish no better fare:
I never ate with angrier appetite

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Than when I left your mowers dinnerless.
And into no Earl's palace will I go.
I know, God knows, too much of palaces!
And if he want me, let him come to me.
But hire us some fair chamber for the night,
And stalling for the horses, and return
With victual for these men, and let us know."

"Yea, my kind lord," said the glad youth,
and went,
Held his head high, and thought himself a
knight,
And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,
Leading the horse, and they were left alone.

But when the Prince had brought his errant
eyes
Home from the rock, sideways he let them
glance
At Enid, where she droopt: his own false
doom,
That shadow of mistrust should never cross
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he sigh'd;
Then with another humorous ruth remark'd
The lusty mowers laboring dinnerless,
And watch'd the sun blaze on the turning
scythe,

And after nodded sleepily in the heat.
But she, remembering her old ruin'd hall,
And all the windy clamor of the daws
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the grass
There growing longest by the meadow's edge,
And into many a listless annulet,
Now over, now beneath her marriage ring,
Wove and unwove it, till the boy return'd
And told them of a chamber, and they went:
Where, after saying to her, "If you will,
Call for the woman of the house," to which
She answer'd, "Thanks, my lord"; the two
remain'd
Apart by all the chamber's width, and mute
As creatures voiceless thro' the fault of birth,
Or two wild men supporters of a shield,
Painted, who stare at open space, nor glance
The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along the street,
And heel against the pavement echoing, burst
Their drowse; and either started while the
door,
Push'd from without, drave backward to the
wall,

And midstmost of a rout of roisterers,
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,
Her suitor in old years before Geraint,
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place, Limours.
He moving up with pliant courtliness,
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,
In the mid-warmth of welcome and grasped
hand,

Found Enid with the corner of his eye,
And knew her sitting sad and solitary.
Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly cheer
To feed the sudden guest, and sumptuously
According to his fashion, bade the host
Call in what men soever were his friends,
And feast with these in honor of their earl,
"And care not for the cost; the cost is mine."

And wine and food were brought, and Earl
Limours

Drank till he jested with all ease, and told
Free tales, and took the word and play'd
upon it,

And made it of two colors: for his talk,
When wine and free companions kindled him,
Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem
Of fifty facets: thus he moved the Prince
To laughter and his comrades to applause.
Then, when the Prince was merry, ask'd
Limours,

"Your leave, my lord, to cross the room,
and speak

To your good damsel there who sits apart
And seems so lonely?" "My free leave,"
he said;

"Get her to speak: she does not speak to
me."

Then rose Limours and looking at his feet,
Like him who tries the bridge he fears may
fall,

Cro'd and came near, lifted adoring eyes,
Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisperingly:

"Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,
Enid my early and my only love,
Enid the loss of whom has turn'd me wild —
What chance is this? how is it I see you
here?"

You are in my power at last, are in my power.
Yet fear me not: I call mine own self wild,
But keep a touch of sweet civility
Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.

I thought, but that your father came between,
In former days you saw me favorably.

And if it were so do not keep it back:
Make me a little happier: let me know it:

Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost?
Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you are.

And, Enid, you and he, I see it with joy —
You sit apart, you do not speak to him,

You come with no attendance, page or maid,
To serve you — does he love you as of old?

For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know
Tho' men may bicker with the things they
love,

They would not make them laughable in all
eyes,

Not while they loved them; and your
wretched dress,

A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks
Your story, that this man loves you no more.

Your beauty is no beauty to him now:
A common chance — right well I know it —
pall'd —

For I know men — nor will you win him back,
For the man's love once gone never re-
turns.

But here is one who loves you as of old:
With more exceeding passion than of old:

Good, speak the word: my followers ring
him round:

He sits unarm'd; I hold a finger up:
They understand: no; I do not mean blood:

Nor need you look so scared at what I say:
My malice is no deeper than a moat,

No stronger than a wall: there is the keep;

He shall not cross us more; speak but the word:

Or speak it not; but then by Him that made me

The one true lover which you ever had,
I will make use of all the power I have.
O pardon me! the madness of that hour,
When first I parted from you, moves me yet."

At this the tender sound of his own voice
And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,
Made his eye moist; but Enid fear'd his eyes,

Moist as they were, wine-heated from the feast;

And answer'd with such craft as women use,
Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance
That breaks upon them perilously, and said:

"Earl, if you love me as in former years,
And do not practise on me, come with morn,
And snatch me from him as by violence;
Leave me to-night: I am weary to the death."

Low at leave-taking, with his brandish'd plume

Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-amorous Earl,

And the stout Prince bade him a loud good-night.

He moving homeward babbled to his men,
How Enid never loved a man but him,
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Geraint,
Debating his command of silence given,
And that she now perforce must violate it,
Held commune with herself, and while she held

He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart
To wake him, but hung o'er him, wholly pleased

To find him yet unwounded after fight,
And hear him breathing low and equally.
Anon she rose, and stepping lightly, heap'd
The pieces of his armor in one place,
All to be there against a sudden need;
Then dozed awhile herself, but overtoild
By that day's grief and travel, evermore
Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn, and then
Went slipping down horrible precipices,
And strongly striking out her limbs awoke;
Then thought she heard the wild Earl at the door,

With all his rout of random followers,
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, summoning her;
Which was the red cock shouting to the light,
As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy world,
And glimmer'd on his armor in the room.
And once again she rose to look at it,
But touch'd it unawares: jangling, the casque
Fell, and he started up and stared at her.
Then breaking his command of silence given,
She told him all that Earl Limours had said,
Except the passage that he loved her not;
Nor left untold the craft herself had used;
But ended with apology so sweet,
Low-spoken, and of so few words, and seem'd
So justified by that necessity,

That tho' he thought "was it for him she wept

In Devon?" he but gave a wrathful groan,
Saying "your sweet faces make good fellows fools

And traitors. Call the host and bid him bring
Charger and palfrey." So she glided out

Among the heavy breathings of the house,
And like a household Spirit at the walls

Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and return'd:
Then tending her rough lord, tho' all unask'd,

In silence, did him service as a squire;
Till issuing arm'd he found the host and cried

"Thy reckoning, friend?" and ere he learnt it, "Take

Five horses and their armors": and the host,
Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,

"My lord, I scarce have spent the worth of one!"

"You will be all the wealthier," said the Prince,

And then to Enid, "Forward! and to-day
I charge you, Enid, more especially,

What this soever you may hear or see,
Or fancy (till I count it of small use

To charge you) that you speak not but obey,"

And Enid answer'd, "Yea, my lord, I know

Your wish, and would obey: but riding first,
I hear the violent threats you do not hear,

I see the danger which you cannot see;
Then not to give you warning, that seems

hard:
Almost beyond me: yet I would obey."

"Yea, so," said he, "do it: be not too wise;

Seeing that you are wedded to a man,
Not quite mismated with a yawning clown,

But one with arms to guard his head and yours,

With eyes to find you out however far,
And ears to hear you even in his dreams."

With that he turned and looked as keenly at her

As careful robins eye the delver's toil;
And that within her which a wanton fool,

Or hasty judge, would have called her guilt,
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.

And Geraint look'd and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten broad,

Led from the territory of false Limours
To the waste earidom of another earl,

Doorm, whom his shaking vassals call'd the Bull,

Went Enid with her sullen follower on.

Once she look'd back, and when she saw him ride

More nearly by many a rood than yesternorn,
It wellnigh made her cheerful: till Geraint

Waving an angry hand as who should say
"You watch me," saddened all her heart

again.
But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,

ht "was it for him she

gave a wrathful groan,
faces make good fellows

the host and bid him bring

"So she glided out

beatings of the house,

and Spirit at the walls

o sleepers, and return'd:

gh lord, tho' all unask'd,

service as a squire;

found the host and cried

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idened all her heart

at a dewy blade,

The sound of many a heavily-galloping hoof

Smote on her ear, and turning round she saw

Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it.

Then not to disobey her lord's behest,

And yet to give him warning, for he rode

As if he heard not, moving back she held

Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.

At which the warrior in his obstinacy,

Because she kept the letter of his word

Was in a manner pleased, and turning, stood.

And in the moment after, wild Limours,

Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-cloud

Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking

storm,

Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,

And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,

Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him and

bore

Down by the length of lance and arm be-

eyond.

The crupper, and so left him stunn'd or dead,

And overthrew the next that follow'd him,

And blindly rush'd on all the rout behind.

But at the flash and motion of the man

They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a shoal

Of darting fish, that on a summer morn

Adown the crystal dikes at Camelot

Comeslipping o'er their shadows on the sand,

But if a man who stands upon the brink

But lift a shining hand against the sun,

There is not left the twinkle of a fin

Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower;

So, scared but at the motion of the man,

Fled all the boon companions of the Earl,

And left him lying in the public way;

So vanish friendships only made in wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled Geraint,

Who saw the chargers of the two that fell

Start from their fallen lords, and wildly fly,

Mixt with the flyers. "Horse and man," he

said,

"All of one mind and all right-honest friends!

Not a hoof left; and I methinks till now

Was honest—paid with horses and with

arms:

I cannot steal or plunder, no nor beg;

And so what say you, shall we strip him

there

Your lover? has your palfrey heart enough

To bear his armor? shall we fast or dine?

No?—then do you, being right honest, pray

That we may meet the horsemen of Earl

Doorm,

I too would still be honest." Thus he said;

And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,

And answering not one word, she led the

way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful loss

Falls in a far land and he knows it not,

But coming back he learns it, and the loss

So pains him that he sickens nigh to death;

So fared it with Geraint, who being prick'd

In combat with the follower of Limours,

Bled underneath his armor secretly,

And so rode on, nor told his gentle wife

What ail'd him, hardly knowing it himself,

Till his eye darken'd and his helmet wagg'd;

And at a sudden swerving of the road,

Tho' happily down on a bank of grass,

The Prince, without a word, from his horse

fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,

Suddenly came, and at his side all pale

Smounting, loosed the fastenings of his

arms,

Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue eye

Moisten, till she had lighted on his wound,

And tearing off her veil of faded silk

Had bared her forehead to the blistering sun,

And swathed the hurt that drain'd her dear

lord's life.

Then after all was done that hand could do,

She rested, and her desolation came

Upon her, and she wept beside the way.

And many past, but none regarded her,

For in that realm of lawless turbulence,

A woman weeping for her murder'd mate

Was cared as much for as a summer shower:

One took him for a victim of Earl Doorm,

Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on him:

Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,

Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl;

Half whistling and half singing a coarse song,

He drove the dust against her veiled eyes:

Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm

Before an ever-fancied arrow, made

The long way smoke beneath him in his

far;

At which her palfrey whinnying lifted heel,

And scour'd into the coppices and was lost,

While the great charger stood, grieved like a

man.

But at the point of noon the huge Earl

Doorm,

Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet beard,

Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,

Came riding with a hundred lances up;

But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,

Cried out with a big voice, "What, is he

dead?"

"No, no, not dead!" she answer'd in all

haste.

"Would some of your kind people take him

up,

And bear him hence out of this cruel sun;

Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead."

Then said Earl Doorm: "Well, if he be

not dead,

Why wait you for him thus? you seem a child.

And be he dead, I count you for a fool:

Your wailing will not quicken him: dead or

not,

You mar a comely face with idiot tears.

Yet, since the face is comely—some of you,

Here, take him up, and bear him to our

hall:

And if he live, we will have him of our band;

And if he die, why earth has earth enough

To hide him." See ye take the charger too,

A noble one."

He spake, and past away,
But left two brawny spearmen, who advanced,
Each growling like a dog, when his good bone
Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,
Gnawing and growling; so the ruffians
growl'd,

Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,
Their chance of booty from the morning's
raid;

Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier,
Such as they brought upon their forays out
For those that might be wounded; laid him
on it

All in the hollow of his shield, and took
And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm,
(His gentle charger following him unled)
And cast him and the bier in which he lay
Down on an oaken settle in the hall,
And then departed, hot in haste to join
Their luckier mates, but growling as before,
And cursing their lost time, and the dead man,
And their own Earl, and their own souls, and
her.

They might as well have blest her: she was
deaf

To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord,
There in the naked hall, propping his head,
And chafing his pale hands, and calling to
him.

And at the last he waken'd from his swoon,
And found his own dear bride propping his
head,

And chafing his faint hands, and calling to
him;

And felt the warm tears falling on his face;
And said to his own heart, "She weeps for
me";

And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as dead,
That he might prove her to the uttermost,
And say to his own heart, "She weeps for
me."

But in the falling afternoon return'd
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to the
hall.

His lusty spearmen follow'd him with noise:
Each hurling down a heap of things that rang
Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,
And doff'd his helm: and then there flutter'd
in,

Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,
A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,
And mingled with the spearmen: and Earl
Doorm

Struck with a knife's haft hard against the
board,

And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his
spears.

And men brought in whole hogs and quarter
beeves,

And all the hall was dim with steam of flesh:
And none spake word, but all sat down at
once,

And ate with tumult in the naked hall,

Feeding like horses when you hear them
feed;

Till Enid shrank far back into herself,
To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.
But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he would,
He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and found
A damsel drooping in a corner of it.

Then he remember'd her, and how she wept;
And out of her there came a power upon him:
And rising on the sudden he said, "Eat!
I never yet beheld a thing so pale.

God's curse, it makes me mad to see you
weep.

Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had your
good man,

For were I dead who is it would weep for me?
Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath,
Have I beheld a lily like yourself.

And so there lived some color in your cheek,
There is not one among my gentlewomen
Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove.

But listen to me, and by me be ruled,
And I will do the thing I have not done,
For you shall share my earldom with me,
girl,

And we will live like two birds in one nest,
And I will fetch you forage from all fields,
For I compel all creatures to my will."

He spoke: the brawny spearman let his cheek
Bulge with the unsallow'd piece, and turn-
ing, stared;

While some, whose souls the old serpent long
had drawn

Down, as the worm draws in the wither'd leaf
And makes it earth, hiss'd each at other's ear
What shall not be recorded—women they,

Women, or what had been those gracious
things,

But now desired the humbling of their best,
Yea, would have helped him to it; and all at
once

They hated her, who took no thought of them,
But answer'd in low voice, her meek head yet
Drooping, "I pray you of your courtesy,
He being as he is, to let me be."

She spake so low he hardly heard her speak,
But like a mighty patron, satisfied

With what himself had done so graciously,
Assumed that she had thanked him, adding,

"Yea,
Eat and be glad, for I account you mine."

She answer'd meekly, "How should I be
glad

Henceforth in all the world at anything,
Until my lord arise and look upon me?"

Here the huge Earl cried out upon her talk,
As all but empty heart and weariness

And sickly nothing; suddenly seized on her,
And bare her by main violence to the board,

And thrust the dish before her, crying,
"Eat."

"No, no," said Enid, vext, "I will not eat,
Till yonder man upon the bier arise,

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And eat with me." "Drink, then," he an-
swered, "Here!"

(And fill'd a horn with wine and held it to
her.)

"Lo! I, myself, when flush'd with fight, or
hot,

God's curse, with anger — often I myself,
Before I well have drunken, scarce can eat:
Drink therefore, and the wine will change
your will."

"Not so," she cried, "by Heaven, I will
not drink,

Till my dear lord arise and bid me do it,
And drink with me; and if he rise no more,
I will not look at wine until I die."

At this he turn'd all red and paced his hall,
Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper lip,

And coming up close to her, said at last:
"Girl, for I see you scorn my courtesies,

Take warning: yonder man is surely dead;
And I compel all creatures to my will.

Not eat nor drink? And wherefore wait for
one,

Who put your beauty to this flout and scorn
By dressing it in rags? Amazed am I,

Beholding how you butt against my wish,
That I forbear you thus: cross me no more.

At least put off to please me this poor gown,
This sliken rag, this beggar-woman's weed:

I love that beauty should go beautifully:
For see you not my gentilewomen here,

How gay, how suited to the house of one,
Who loves that beauty should go beautifully!

Rise therefore; robe yourself in this: obey."

He spoke, and one among his gentle-
women

Display'd a splendid silk of foreign loom,
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue

Play'd into green, and thicker down the
front

With jewels than the sward with drops of
dew,

When all night long a cloud clings to the hill,
And with the dawn ascending lets the day

Strike where it clung: so thickly shone the
gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be moved
Than hardest tyrants in their day of power,

With life-long injuries burning unavenged,
And now their hour has come; and Enid
said:

"In this poor gown my dear lord found me
first,

And loved me serving in my father's hall:
In this poor gown I rode with him to court,

And there the Queen array'd me like the
sun:

In this poor gown he bade me clothe myself,
When now we rode upon this fatal quest

Of honor, where no honor can be gain'd:
And this poor gown I will not cast aside

Until himself arise a living man,
And bid me cast it. I have griefs enough:

Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be:
I never loved, can never love but him:
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,
He being as he is, to let me be."

Then strode the brute Earl up and down his
hall,

And took his russet beard between his teeth;
Last, coming up quite close, and in his mood

Crying, "I count it of no more avail,
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with you;

Take my salute," unknighly with flat hand,
However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,
And since she thought, "he had not dared to
do it,

Except he surely knew my lord was dead,"
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,

As of a wild thing taken in the trap,
Which sees the trapper coming thro' the
wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at his
sword,

(It lay beside him in the hollow shield,)
Made but a single bound, and with a sweep
of it

Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a ball
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the floor.

So died Earl Doorm by him he counted dead.
And all the men and women in the hall

Rose when they saw the dead man rise, and
fled

Yelling as from a spectre, and the two
Were left alone together, and he said:

"Enid I have used you worse than that
dead man;

Done you more wrong: we both have under-
gone

That trouble which has left me thrice your
own:

Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.
And here I lay this penance on myself,

Not, th' mine own ears heard you yester-
morn —

You thought me sleeping, but I heard you
say,

I heard you say, that you were no true wife:
I swear I will not ask your meaning in it:

I do believe yourself against yourself,
And will henceforward rather die than
doubt."

And Enid could not say one tender word,
She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart:

She only pray'd him, "Fly, they will return
And slay you; fly, your charger is without,

My palfrey lost." "Then, Enid, shall you
ride

Behind me." "Yea," said Enid, "let us go."
And moving out they found the stately horse,

Who now no more a vassal to the thief,
But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,

Neigh'd with all gladness as they came, and
stoop'd

With a low whinny toward the pair: and she
Kiss'd the white star upon his noble front,

Glad also; then Geraint upon the horse
Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on his
foot
She set her own and climb'd; he turn'd his
face
And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast her
arms
About him, and at once they rode away.

And never yet, since high in Paradise
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,
Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind,
Than lived thro' her who in that perilous
hour

Put hand to hand beneath her husband's
heart,

And felt him hers again: she did not weep,
But o'er her meek eyes came a happy mist
Like that which kept the heart of Eden green
Before the useful trouble of the rain:

Yet not so misty were her meek blue eyes
As not to see before them on the path,
Right in the gateway of the bandit hold,
A knight of Arthur's court, who laid his lance
In rest, and made as if to fall upon him.
Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of blood,
She, with her mind all full of what had
chanced,

Shriek'd to the stranger, "Slay not a dead
man!"

"The voice of Enid," said the knight: but
she,

Beholding it was Edyrn son of Nudd,
Was moved so much the more, and shriek'd
again,

"O cousin, slay not him who gave you life."
And Edyrn moving frankly forward spake:

"My lord Geraint, I greet you with all love;
I took you for a bandit knight of Doorn;
And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon him,
Who love you, Prince, with something of the
love

Wherewith we love the Heaven that chastens
us.

For once, when I was up so high in pride
That I was half way down the slope to Hell,
By overthrowing me you threw me higher.
Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table Round,
And since I knew this Earl, when I myself
Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,
I come the mouthpiece of our King to Doorn
(The King is close behind me) bidding him
Disband himself, and scatter all his powers,
Submit, and hear the judgment of the King."

"He hears the judgment of the King of
Kings,"
Cried the wan Prince: "and lo the powers
of Doorn

Are scatter'd," and he pointed to the field
Where, huddled here and there on mound
and knoll,

Were men and women staring and aghast,
While some yet fled; and then he plainlier
told

How the huge Earl lay slain within his hall.
But when the knight besought him, "Follow
me,

Prince, to the camp, and in the King's own
ear

Speak what has chanced; you surely have
endured

Strange chances here alone"; that other
flush'd,

And hung his head, and halted in reply,
Fearing the mild face of the blameless King,

And after madness acted question ask'd:
Till Edyrn crying, "If you will not go

To Arthur, then will Arthur come to you,"
"Enough," he said, "I follow," and they
went.

But Enid in their going had two fears,
One from the bandit scatter'd in the field,

And one from Edyrn. Every now and then,
When Edyrn rein'd his charger at her side,

She shrank a little. In a hollow land,
From which old fires have broken, men may
fear

Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving, said:

"Fair and dear cousin, you that most had
cause

To fear me, fear no longer, I am changed.
Yourself were first the blameless cause to
make

My nature's prideful sparkle in the blood
Break into furious flame; being repulsed
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and wrought

Until I overturn'd him; then set up
(With one main purpose ever at my heart)

My haughty jousts, and took a paramour;
Did her mock-honor as the fairest fair,

And, toppling over all antagonism,
So wax'd in pride, that I believed myself

Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh mad:
And, but for my main purpose in these
jousts,

I should have slain your father, seized your-
self.

I lived in hope that some time you would
come

To these my lists with him whom best you
loved;

And there, poor cousin, with your meek blue
eyes,

The truest eyes that ever answer'd heaven,
Behold me overturn and trample on him.

Then, had you cried, or knelt, or pray'd to
me,

I should not less have killed him. And you
came, —

But once you came, — and with your own
true eyes

Beheld the man you loved (I speak as one
Speaks of a service done him) overthrow

My proud self, and my purpose three years
old,

And set his foot upon me, and give me life.
There was I broken down; there was I saved:

Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating the
life

He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.
And all the penance the Queen laid upon me

Was but to rest awhile within her court;
Where first as sullen as a beast new-caged,

And waiting to be treated like a wolf,

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Queen laid upon me
 within her court;
 a beast new-caged,
 ed like a wolf,

Because I knew my deeds were known, I
 found,

Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,
 Such fine reserve and noble reticence,
 Manners so kind, yet stately, such a grace
 Of tenderest courtesy, that I began
 To glance behind me at my former life,
 And find that it had been the wolf's indeed:
 And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high saint,
 Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,
 Subdued me somewhat to that gentleness,
 Which, when it weds with manhood, makes
 a man.

And you were often there about the Queen,
 But saw me not, or marked not if you saw;
 Nor did I care or dare to speak with you,
 But kept myself aloof till I was changed;
 And fear not, cousin; I am changed indeed."

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,
 Like simple noble natures, credulous
 Of what they long for, good in friend or foe,
 There most in those who most have done
 them ill.

And when they reach'd the camp the king
 himself

Advanced to greet them, and beholding her
 Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a word,
 But went apart with Edryn, whom he held
 In converse for a little, and return'd,
 And, gravely smiling, lifted her from horse,
 And kiss'd her with all pureness, brother-like,
 And show'd an empty tent allotted her,
 And glancing for a minute, till he saw her
 Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and said:

"Prince, when of late you pray'd me for
 my leave

To move to your own land, and there defend
 Your marches, I was prick'd with some re-
 proof,

As one that let foul wrong stagnate and be,
 By having look'd too much thro' alien eyes,
 And wrought too long with delegated hands,
 Not used mine own; but now behold me
 come

To cleanse this common sewer of all my
 realm,

With Edryn and with others: have you
 look'd

At Edryn? have you seen how nobly changed?

This work of his is great and wonderful.
 His very face with change of heart is changed.

The world will not believe a man repents:
 And this wise world of ours is mainly right.

Full seldom *does* a man repent, or use
 Both grace and will to pick the vicious quitch

Of blood and custom wholly out of him,
 And make all clean, and plant himself afresh.

Edryn has done it, weeding all his heart
 As I will weed this land before I go.

I, therefore, made him of our Table Round,
 Not rashly, but have proved him every way

One of our noblest, our most valorous,
 Sanest and most obedient: and indeed

This work of Edryn wrought upon himself
 After a life of violence, seems to me

A thousand-fold more great and wonderful

Than if some knight of mine, risking his life,
 My subject with my subjects under him,
 Should make an onslaught single on a realm
 Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by one,
 And were himself nigh wounded to the
 death."

So spake the King; low bow'd the Prince,
 and felt

His work was neither great nor wonderful,
 And past to Enid's tent; and thither came
 The King's own leech to look into his hurt;
 And Enid tended on him there; and there
 Her constant motion round him, and the
 breath

Of her sweet tendance hovering over him,
 Fill'd all the genial courses of his blood
 With deeper and with ever deeper love,
 As the south-west that blowing Bala lake
 Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,
 The blameless King went forth and cast his
 eyes

On whom his father Uther left in charge
 Long since, to guard the justice of the King:

He look'd and found them wanting; and as
 now

Men weed the white horse on the Berkshire
 hills

To keep him bright and clean as heretofore,
 He rooted out the slothful officer

Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at
 wrong,

And in their chairs set up a stronger race
 With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand
 men

To till the wastes, and moving everywhere
 Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,

And broke the bandit holds and cleansed the
 land.

Then, when Geraint was whole again, they
 past

With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.
 There the great Queen once more embraced
 her friend,

And clothed her in apparel like the day.
 And tho' Geraint could never take again

That comfort from their converse which he
 took

Before the Queen's fair name was breathed
 upon,

He rested well content that all was well.
 Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,

And fifty knights rode with them to the shores
 Of Severn, and they past to their own land.

And there he kept the justice of the King
 So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts

Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died:
 And being ever foremost in the chase,

And victor at the tilt and tournament,
 They call'd him the great Prince and man of
 men.

But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call
 Enid the Fair, a grateful people named

Enid the Good; and in their halls arose
 The cry of children, Enids

Geraints

Of times to be; nor did he doubt her more
But rested in her fealty, till he crown'd
A happy life with a fair death, and fell
Against the heathen of the Northern Sea
In battle, fighting for the blameless King.

VIVIEN.

A STORM was coming, but the winds were
still,

And in the wild woods of Broceliande,
Before an oak, so hollow, huge and old
It look'd a tower of ruin'd masonwork,
At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's court:
She hated all the knights, and heard in
thought
Their lavish comment when her name was
named.

For once, when Arthur walking all alone,
Vext at a rumor rife about the Queen,
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted fair,
Would fain have wrought upon his cloudy
mood

With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken voice,
And flutter'd adoration, and at last
With dark sweet hints of some who prized
him more

Than who should prize him most; at which
the King

Had gazed upon her blankly and gone by:
But one had watch'd, and had not held his
peace:

It made the laughter of an afternoon
That Vivien should attempt the blameless
King.

And after that, she set herself to gain
Him, the most famous man of all those times,
Merlin, who knew the range of all their arts,
Had built the King his havens, ships, and
halls,

Was also Bard, and knew the starry heavens;
The people called him Wizard; whom at first
She play'd about with slight and sprightly
talk,

And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd points
Of slander, glancing here and grazing there;
And yielding to his kindlier moods, the Seer
Would watch her at her petulance, and play,
Ev'n when they seem'd unlovable, and laugh
As those that watch a kitten; thus he grew
Tolerant of what he half disdain'd, and she,
Perceiving that she was but half disdain'd,
Began to break her sports with graver fits,
Turn red or pale, would often when they met
Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him

With such a fixt devotion, that the old man,
Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at times
Would flatter his own wish in age for love,
And half believe her true: for thus at times
He waver'd; but that other clung to him,
Fixt in her will, and so the seasons went.
Then fell upon him a great melancholy;
And leaving Arthur's court he gain'd the
beach;

There found a little boat, and stept into it;
And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd her not.
She took the helm and he the sail; the boat
Drave with a sudden wind across the deeps,
And touching Breton sands they disembark'd.

And then she follow'd Merlin all the way,
Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande.
For Merlin once had told her of a charm,
The which if any wrought on any one
With woven paces and with waving arms,
The man so wrought on ever seem'd to lie
Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower,
From which was no escape forevermore;
And none could find that man forevermore,
Nor could he see but him who wrought the
charm

Coming and going, and he lay as dead
And lost to life and use and name and fame.
And Vivien ever sought to work the charm
Upon the great Enchanter of the Time,
As fancying that her glory would be great
According to his greatness whom she
quench'd.

There lay she all her length and kiss'd his
feet,

As if in deepest reverence and in love.
A twist of gold was round her hair; a robe
Of samite without price, that more exprest
Than hid her, clung about her lissome limbs,
In color like the satin-shining palm

On sallows in the windy gleams of March;
And while she kiss'd them, crying, "Tram-
ple me,

Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro' the
world,

And I will pay you worship: tread me down
And I will kiss you for it"; he was mute:
So dark a forethought roll'd about his brain,
As on a dull day in an Ocean cave
The blind wave feeling round his long sea-
hall

In silence: wherefore, when she lifted up
A face of sad appeal, and spake and said,
"O Merlin, do you love me?" and again,
"O Merlin, do you love me?" and once
more,
"Great Master, do you love me?" he was
mute.

And lissome Vivien, holding by his heel,
Writhed toward him, sidled up his knee and
sat,

Behind his ankle twined her hollow feet
Together, curved an arm about his neck,
Clung like a snake; and letting her left hand
Droop from his mighty shoulder as a leaf,
Made with her right a comb of pearl to part
The lists of such a beard as youth gone out
Had left in ashes: then he spoke and said,
Not looking at her, "Who are wise in love
Love most, say least," and Vivien answer'd
quick,

"I saw the little elf-god eyeless once
In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot:
But neither eyes nor tongue,-- O stupid
child!

Yet you are wise who say it; let me think
Silence is wisdom: I am silent then

boat, and stept into it ;
but he mark'd her not.
And he the sail ; the boat
wind across the deeps,
on saunds they disem-

Merlin all the way,
ds of Broceliande,
told her of a charm,
ought on any one
d with waving arms,
on ever seem'd to lie
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Camelot :
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it ; let me think
ilent then

And ask no kiss" ; then adding all at once,
"And lo, I clothe myself with wisdom," drew
The vast and shaggy mantle of his beard
Across her neck and bosom to her knee,
And call'd herself a gilded summer fly
Caught in a great old tyrant spider's web,
Who meant to eat her up in that wild wood
Without one word. So Vivien call'd her-
self,

But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star
Veil'd in gray vapor ; till he sadly smiled :
"To what request for what strange boon," he
said,

"Are these your pretty tricks and fooleries,
O Vivien, the preamble? yet my thanks,
For these have broken up my melancholy."

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily,
"What, O my Master, have you found your
voice?"

I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks at last!
But yesterday you never open'd lip,
Except indeed to drink : no cup had we :
In mine own lady palms I cul'd the spring
That gather'd trickling dropwise from the
cleft,

And made a pretty cup of both my hands
And offer'd you it kneeling : then you drank
And knew no more, nor gave me one poor
word ;

O no more thanks than might a goat have
given
With no more sign of reverence than a
beard

And when we halted at that other well,
and I was faint to swooning, and you lay
Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of those
Deep meadows we had traversed, did you
know

That Vivien bathed your feet before her
own?

And yet no thanks : and all thro' this wild
wood

And all this morning when I fondled you :
Boon, yes, there was a boon, one not so
strange —

How had I wrong'd you? surely you are
wise,
But such a silence is more wise than kind."

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and
said :

"O did you never lie upon the shore,
And watch the curl'd white of the coming
wave

Glass'd in the slippery sand before it breaks?
Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasurable,
Dark in the glass of some presageful mood,
Had I for three days seen, ready to fall.

And then I rose and fled from Arthur's court
To break the mood. You follow'd me un-
ask'd ;

And when I look'd, and saw you following
still,

My mind involved yourself the nearest thing
In that mind-mis' : for shall I tell you truth?
You seem'd that wave about to break upon
me

And sweep me from my hold upon the world,
My use and name and fame. Your pardon,
child,

Your pretty sports have brighten'd all again,
And ask your boon, for boon I owe you thrice,
Once for wrong done you by confusion, next
For thanks it seems till now neglected, last
For these your dainty gambols : wherefore
ask :

And take this boon so strange and not so
strange."

And Vivien answer'd, smiling mournfully :
"O not so strange as my long asking it,
Nor yet so strange as you yourself are strange,
Nor half so strange as that dark mood of
yours.

I ever fear'd you were not wholly mine ;
And see, yourself have own'd you did me
wrong.

The people call you prophet : let it be :
But not of those that can expound them-
selves.

Take Vivien for expounder : she will call
That three-days-long presageful gloom of
yours

No presage, but the same mistrustful mood
That makes you seem less noble than your-
self,

Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,
Now ask'd again : for see you not, dear love,
That such a mood as that, which lately
gloom'd

Your fancy when you saw me following you,
Must make me fear still more you are not
mine,

Must make me yearn still more to prove you
mine,

And make me wish still more to learn this
charm

Of woven paces and of waving hands,
As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it me.
The charm so taught will charm us both to
rest.

For, grant me some slight power upon your
fate,

I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,
Should rest and let you rest, knowing you
mine,

And therefore be as great as you are named,
Not muffled round with selfish reticence.

How hard you look and how denyingly!
O, if you think this wickedness in me,
That I should prove it on you unawares,
To make you lose your use and name and
fame,

That makes me most indignant ; then our
bond

Had best be loosed forever : but think or not,
By Heaven that hears I tell you the clean
truth,

As clean as blood of babes, as white as milk :
O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,
If these unwitty wandering wits of mine,
F n in the jumbled rubbish of a dream,

Be tript on such conjectural treachery —
May this hard earth cleave to the Nadir hell
Down, down, and close again, and nip me flat,

If I be such a traitress. Yield my boon,
Till which I scarce can yield you all I am
And grant my re-iterated wish.
The great proof of your love : because I think,
However quiet, you hardly know me yet."

And Merlin loosed his hand from her and said :

"I never was less wise, however wise,
Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of trust,
Than when I told you first of such a charm.
Yea, if you talk of trust I tell you this,
Too much I trusted, when I told you that,
And stirr'd this vice in you which ruin'd man
Thro' woman the first hour ; for howso'er
In children a great curiousness be well,
Who have to learn themselves and all the
world,

In you, that are no child, for still I find
Your face is practised, when I spell the lines,
I call it, — well, I will not call it vice :
But since you name yourself the summer fly,
I well could wish a cobweb for the gnat,
That settles, beaten back, and beaten back
Settles, till one could yield for weariness :
But since I will not yield to give you power
Upon my life and use and name and fame,
Why will you never ask some other boon?
Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too much."

And Vivien, like the tenderest-hearted
maid

That ever bided tryst at village stile,
Made answer, either eyelid wet with tears.
"Nay, master, be not wrathful with your
maid :
Caress her : let her feel herself forgiven
Who feels no heart to ask another boon.
I think you hardly know the tender rhyme
Of 'trust me not at all or all in all.'
I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it once,
And it shall answer for me. Listen to it.

'In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers :
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

'It is the little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all.

'The little rift within the lover's lute,
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

'It is not worth the keeping : let it go :
But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no.
And trust me not at all or all in all.'

O master, do you love my tender rhyme?"

And Merlin look'd and had believed her
true,

So tender was her voice, so fair her face,
So sweetly gleam'd her eyes, that he had seen
Like sunlight on the plain behind a tower :
And yet he answer'd half indignantly :

"Far other was the song that once I heard
By this huge oak, sung nearly where we sit :
For here we met, some ten or twelve of us,
To chase a creature that was current then
In these woodlands, the hart with golden
horns.

It was the time when first the question rose
About the founding of a Table Round,
That was to be, for love of God and men
And noble deeds, the flower of all the world,
And each incited each to noble deeds.
And while we waited, one, the youngest of us,
We could not keep him silent, out he flash'd,
And into such a song, such fire for fame,
Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down
To such a stern and iron-clashing close,
That when he stopt we long'd to hurl to-
gether,

And should have done it ; but the beauteous
beast

Scared by the noise upstart at our feet,
And like a silver shadow slipt away
Thro' the dim land ; and all day long we rode
Thro' the dim land against a rushing wind,
That glorious roundel echoing in our ears,
And chased the flashes of his golden horns
Until they vanish'd by the fairy well
That laughs at iron — as our warriors did —
Where children cast their pins and nails, and
cry,

"Laugh little well," but touch it with a
sword,

It buzzes wildly round the point ; and there
We lost him : such a noble song was that.
But, Vivien, when you sang me that sweet
rhyme,

I felt as tho' you knew this cursed charm,
Were proving it on me, and that I lay
And felt them slowly ebbing, name and
fame."

And Vivien answer'd, smiling mournfully :
"O mine have cbb'd away forevermore,
And all thro' following you to this wild wood,
Because I saw you sad, to comfort you.
Lo now, what hearts have men ! they never
mount

As high as woman in her selfless mood.
And touching fame, howe'er you scorn my
song
Take one verse more — the lady speaks it —
this :

'My name, once mine, now thine, is close-
lier mine,
For fame, could fame be mine, that fame
were thine,
And shame, could shame be thine, that
shame were mine.
So trust me not at all or all in all.'

"Says she not well? and there is more —
this rhyme
Is like the fair pearl necklace of the Queen,
That burst in dancing, and the pearls were
lost :
Some lost, some stolen, some as relics kept.
But nevermore the same two sister pearls

the song that once I heard
 singing nearly where we sit:
 ten or twelve of us,
 that was current then
 the hart with golden

first the question rose
 of a Table Round,
 of God and men
 flower of all the world,
 to noble deeds.
 one, the youngest of us,
 silent, out he flash'd,
 such fire for fame,
 in it, coming down
 on-clashing close,
 we long'd to hurl to-

it; but the beauteous

started at our feet,
 now slept away
 d all day long we rode
 against a rushing wind,
 echoing in our ears,
 of his golden horns
 the fairy well
 as our warriors did —
 their pins and nails, and

but touch it with a
 the point; and there
 the song was that.
 sang me that sweet

his cursed charm,
 and that I lay
 ebbing, name and

smiling mournfully;
 say forevermore,
 you to this wild wood,
 to comfort you.
 ve men I they never

selfless mood.
 ve'er you scorn my

the lady speaks it—

now thine, is close-
 mine, that fame
 me be thine, that
 in all.'

and there is more —

face of the Queen,
 and the pearls were

me as relics kept.
 two sister pearls

Ran down the silken thread to kiss each
 other

On her white neck — so is it with this rhyme;
 It lives dispersedly in many hands,
 And every minstrel sings it differently;
 Yet is there one true line, the pearl of pearls;
 'Man dreams of Fame while woman wakes
 to love.'

True: Love, tho' Love were of the grossest,
 carves

A portion from the solid present, eats
 And uses, careless of the rest; but Fame,
 The Fame that follows death is nothing to
 us;

And what is Fame in life but half-disfame,
 And counterchanged with darkness? you
 yourself

Know well that Envy calls you Devil's son,
 And since you seem the Master of all Art,
 They fair would make you Master of all
 Vice."

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and
 said,

"I once was looking for a magic weed,
 And found a fair young squire who sat alone,
 Had carved himself a knightly shield of wood,
 And then was painting on it fancied arms,
 Azure, an Eagle rising, or, the Sun
 In dexter chief; the scroll 'I follow fame.'
 And speaking not, but leaning over him,
 I took his brush and blotted out the bird,
 And made a Gardener putting in a graft,
 With this for motto, 'Kather use than fame.'
 You should have seen him blush; but after-
 wards

He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien,
 For you, methinks you think you love me well;
 For me, I love you somewhat: rest: and
 Love

Should have some rest and pleasure in him-
 self,

Not ever be too curious for a boon,
 Too prurient for a proof against the grain
 Of him you say you love: but Fame with
 men,

Being but ampler means to serve mankind,
 Should have small rest or pleasure in herself,
 But work as vassal to the larger love,
 That dwarfs the petty love of one to one.

Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame again
 Increasing gave me use. Lo, there my boon!
 What other? for men sought to prove me vile.
 Because I wish'd to give them greater minds;
 And then did Envy call me Devil's son;
 The sick weak beast seeking to help herself
 By striking at her better, miss'd, and brought
 Her own claw back, and wounded her own
 heart.

Sweet were the days when I was all unknown,
 But when my name was lifted up, the storm
 Broke on the mountain and I cared not for it.
 Right well I know I that Fame is half-disfame,
 Yet needs must work my work. That other
 fame,

To one at least, who hath not children, vague,
 The cackle of the unborn about the grave,
 I cared not for it: a single misty star,

Which is the second in a line of stars

That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,
 I never gazed upon it but I dreamt
 Of some vast charm concluded in that star
 To make fame nothing. Wherefore, if I fear,
 Giving you power upon me thro' this charm,
 That you might play me falsely, having power,
 However well you think you love me now
 (As sons of kings loving in pupillage
 Have turn'd to tyrants when they came to
 power)

I rather dread the loss of use than fame;
 If you — and not so much from wickedness,
 As some wild turn of anger, or a mood
 Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,
 To keep me all to your own self, or else
 A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy,
 Should try this charm on whom you say you
 love."

And Vivien answer'd, smiling as in wrath:
 "Have I not sworn? I am not trusted.
 Good!

Well, hide it, hide it; I shall find it out;
 And being found take heed of Vivien.
 A woman and not trusted, doubtless I
 Might feel some sudden turn of anger born
 Of your misfaith; and your fine epithet
 Is accurate too, for this full love of mine
 Without the full heart back may merit well
 Your term of overstrain'd. So used as I,
 My daily wonder is, I love at all.
 And as to woman's jealousy, O why not?
 O to what end, except a jealous one,
 And one to make me jealous if I love,
 Was this fair charm invented by yourself?
 I well believe that all about this world
 You cage a buxom captive here and there,
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower
 From which is no escape forevermore."

Then the great Master merrily answer'd
 her;

"Full many a love in loving youth was mine,
 I needed then no charm to keep them mine
 But youth and love; and that full heart of
 yours

Whereof you prattle, may now assure you
 mine;

So live uncharm'd. For those who wrought
 it first,

The wrist is parted from the hand that waved,
 The feet unmortised from their ankle-bones
 Who paced it, ages back; but will you hear
 The legend as in guerdon for your rhyme?

"There lived a king in the most Eastern
 East,

Less old than I, yet older, for my blood
 Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.
 A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,
 Whose bark had plunder'd twenty nameless
 isles;

And passing one, at the high peep of dawn,
 He saw two cities in a thousand boats
 All fighting for a woman on the sea.
 And pushing his black craft among them all,
 He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought her off,

With loss of half his people arrow-slain ;
A maid so smooth, so white, so wonderful,
They said a light came from her when she
moved :

And since the pirate would not yield her up,
The King impaled him for his piracy ;
Then made her Queen : but those isle-nur-
tur'd eyes

Waged such unwilling tho' successful war-
On all the youth, they sicken'd ; councils
thinn'd,

And armies waned, for magnet-like she drew
The rustiest iron of old fighters' hearts ;
And beasts themselves would worship ; cam-
els knelt

Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain back
That carry kings in castles, bow'd black
knees

Of homage, ringing with their serpent hands,
To make her smile, her golden ankle-bells.
What wonder being jealous, that he sent
His horns of proclamation out thro' all
The hundred under-kingdoms that he sway'd
To find a wizard who might teach the King
Some charm, which being wrought upon the
Queen

Might keep her all his own : to such a one
He promised more than ever king has given,
A league of mountain full of golden mines,
A province with a hundred miles of coast,
A palace and a princess, all for him ;
But on all those who tried and fail'd, the
King

Pronounced a dismal sentence, meaning by it
To keep the list low and pretenders back,
Or like a king, not to be trifled with —
Their heads should moulder on the city
gates.

And many tried and fail'd, because the charm
Of nature in her overbore their own :
And many a wizard brow bleach'd on the
walls :

And many weeks a troop of carrion crows
Hung like a cloud above the gateway towers."

And Vivien, breaking in upon him, said :
"I sit and gather honey ; yet, methinks,
Your tongue has tript a little : ask yourself.
The lady never made *unwilling* war
With those fine eyes : she had her pleasure
in it.

And made her good man jealous with good
cause.

And lived there neither dame nor damsel
then

Wroth at a lover's loss ? were all as tame,
I mean, as noble, as their Queen was fair ?
Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,
Or pinch a murderous dust into her drink,
Or make her paler with a poison'd rose ?
Well, those were not our days ; but did they
find

A wizard ? Tell me, was he like to thee ?"

She ceased, and made her lithe arm round
his neck
Tighten, and then drew back, and let her
eyes

Speak for her, glowing on him, like a bride's
On her new lord, her own, the first of men.

He answer'd laughing, "Nay, not like to
me.

At last they found — his foragers for charms —
A little glassy-headed hairless man,
Who lived alone in a great wild on grass ;
Read but one book, and ever reading grew
So grated down and fled away with thought,
So lean his eyes were monstrous ; while the
skin

Clung but to crate and basket, ribs and spine.
And since he kept his mind on one sole aim,
Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor tasted flesh,
Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the wall
That sunders ghosts and shadow-casting men
Became a crystal, and he saw them thro' it,
And heard their voices talk behind the wall,
And learnt their elemental secrets, powers
And forces ; often o'er the sun's bright eye
Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,
And lash'd it at the base with slanting storm ;
Or in the noon of mist and driving rain,
When the lake whiten'd and the pine-wood
road'd,

And the calm'd mountain was a shadow,
sun'd

The world to peace again : here was the man.
And so by force they dragg'd him to the
King.

And then he taught the King to charm the
Queen

In such wise, that no man could see her
more,

Nor saw she save the King, who wrought the
charm,

Coming and going, and she lay as dead,
And lost all use of life : but when the King
Made proffer of the league of golden mines,
The province with a hundred miles of coast,
The palace and the princess, that old man
Went back to his old wild, and lived on grass,
And vanish'd, and his book came down to
me."

And Vivien answer'd, smiling saucily :
"You have the book : the charm is written
in it :

Good : take my counsel : let me know it at
once :

For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,
With each chest lock'd and padlock'd thirty-
fold,

And whelm all this beneath as vast a mound
As after furious battle turfs the slain
On some wild down above the windy deep,
I yet should strike upon a sudden means
To dig, pick, open, find and read the charm :
Then, if I tried it, who should blame me
then ?"

And smiling as a Master smiles at one
That is not of his school, nor any school
But that where blind and naked Ignorance
Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,
On all things all day long, he answered her :

on him, like a bride's
own, the first of men.

ing, "Nay, not like to

s foragers for charms—
hairless man,
great wild on grass;
and ever reading grew
d away with thought,
monstrous; while the

basket, ribs and spine.
mind on one sole aim,
wine, nor tasted flesh,
ish, to him the wall
d shadow-casting men
he saw them thro' it,
talk behind the wall,
atal secrets, powers
the sun's bright eye
an inky cloud,
e with slanting storm;
and driving rain,
d and the pine-wood

tain was a shadow,

n: here was the man.
dragg'd him to the

King to charm the

man could see her

ing, who wrought the

she lay as dead,
but when the King
ue of golden mines,
dred miles of coast,
cess, that old man
d, and lived on grass,
book came down to

smiling saucily:
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nd read the charm:
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ants, unashamed,
he answered he:



"She ceased, and made her lithe arm round his neck
Tighten, and then drew back, and let her eyes
Speak for her."

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"You read the book, my pretty Vivien !
O ay, it is but twenty pages long,
But every page having an ample marge,
And every marge enclosing in the midst
A square of text that looks a little blot,
The text no larger than the limbs of fleas ;
And every square of text an awful charm,
Writ in a language that has long gone by.
So long, that mountains have arisen since
With cities on their flanks — *you* read the
book !

And every margin scribbled, crost and
cramm'd
With comment, densest condensation, hard
To mind and eye ; but the long sleepless
nights

Of my long life have made it easy to me.
And none can read the text, not even I ;
And none can read the comment but myself ;
And in the comment did I find the charm.
O, the results are simple ; a mere child
Might use it to the harm of any one,
And never could undo it : ask no more :
For tho' you should not prove it upon me,
But keep that oath you swore, you might,
perchance,
Assay it on some one of the Table Round,
And all because you dream they babble of
you."

And Vivien, frowning in true anger, said :
"What dare the full-fed liars say of me ?
They ride abroad redressing human wrongs !
They sit with knife in meat and wine in horn.
They bound to holy vows of chastity !
Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.
But you are man, you well can understand
The shame that cannot be explain'd for
shame.
Not one of all the drove should touch me :
swine !"

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her
words,
"You breathe but accusation vast and vague,
Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If you
know,
Set up the charge you know, to stand or fall !"

And Vivien answer'd, frowning wrathfully :
"O ay, what say ye to Sir Valence, him
Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er his
wife

And two fair babes, and went to distant lands ;
Was one year gone, and on returning found
Not two but three : there lay the reckling,
one
But one hour old ! What said the happy
sire ?

A seven months' babe had been a truer gift.
Those twelve sweet moons confused his fa-
therhood !"

Then answer'd Merlin : "Nay, I know the
tale.
Sir Valence wedded with an outland dame :
Some cause had kept him sunder'd from his
wife ;

One child they had : it lived with her : she
died :

His kinsman travelling on his own affair
Was charged by Valence to bring home the
child.

He brought, not found it therefore : take the
truth."

"O ay," said Vivien, "overtrue a tale.
What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagamore,
That ardent man ? 'to pluck the flower in
season' ;

So says the song, 'I trow it is no treason.'
O Master, shall we call him overquick
To crop his own sweet rose before the hour ?"

And Merlin answer'd : "Overquick are
you
To catch a lotly plume fall'n from the wing
Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole prey
Is man's good name : he never wronged his
bride.

I know the tale. An angry gust of wind
Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-room'd
And many-corridor'd complexities
Of Arthur's palace : then he found a door
And darkling felt the sculptured ornament
That weathren round it made it seem his
own ;

And wearied out made for the couch and
slept,

A stainless man beside a stainless maid ;
And either slept, nor knew of other there ;
Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd chastely
down,

Blushing upon them blushing, and at once
He rose without a word and parted from her :
But when the thing was blazed about the
court,

The brute world howling forced them into
bonds,
And as it chanced they are happy, being
pure."

"O ay," said Vivien, "that were likely
too.

What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale
And of the horrid foulness that he wrought,
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of Christ,
Or some black wether of St. Satan's fold.
What, in the precincts of the chapel-yard,
Among the knightly brasses of the graves,
And by the cold *Hic Jacets* of the dead !"

And Merlin answer'd, careless of her
charge :

"A sober man is Percivale and pure ;
But once in life was fluster'd with new wine ;
Then paced for coolness in the chapel-yard,
Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught
And meant to stamp him with her master's
mark ;

And that he sinn'd, is not believable ;
For, look upon his face ! — but if he sinn'd,
The sin that practice burns into the blood,
And not the one dark hour which brings re-
morse,

Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be :
Or else were he, the holy king, whose hymns
Are chanted in the minster, worse than all.
But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye
more ? ”

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in wrath :
“ O ay ; what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend ?
Traitor or true ? that commerce with the
Queen,
I ask you, is it clamor'd by the child,
Or whisper'd in the corner ? do you know it ? ”

To which he answer'd sadly : “ Yea, I
know it.
Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,
To fetch her, and she took him for the King ;
So fixt her fancy on him : let him be,
But have you no one word of loyal praise
For Arthur, blameless King and stainless
man ? ”

She answer'd with a low and chuckling
laugh :
“ Him ? is he a man at all, who knows and
winks ?
Sees what his fair bride is and does, and
winks ?
By which the good king means to blind him-
self,
And blinds himself and all the Table Round
To all the foulness that they work. Myself
Could call him (were it not for womanhood)
The pretty, popular name such manhood
earns,
Could call him the main cause of all their
crime ;
Yea, were he not crown'd king, coward, and
fool. ”

Then Merlin to his own heart, loathing,
said :
“ O true and tender ! O my liege and king !
O selfless man and stainless gentleman,
Who wouldst against thine own eye-witness
fain
Have all men true and leal, all women pure :
How, in the mouths of base interpreters,
From over-fineness not intelligible
To things with every sense as false and foul
As the poached filth that floods the middle
street,
Is thy white blamelessness accounted blame ! ”

But Vivien deeming Merlin overborne
By instance, recommenced, and let her
tongue
Rage like a fire among the noblest names,
Polluting, and imputing her whole self,
Defaming and defacing, till she left
Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad clean.

Her words had issue other than she will'd.
He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down, and
made
A snowy penthouse for his hollow eyes,
And mutter'd in himself, “ Tell her the
charm ! ”

So, if she had it, would she rail on me
To snare the next, and if she have it not,
So will she rail. What did the wanton say ?
‘ Not mount as high ’ ; we scarce can sink as
low :

For men at most differ as Heaven and earth,
But women, worst and best, as Heaven and
Hell.

I know the Table Round, my friends of old ;
All brave, and many generous, and some
chaste.

I think she cloaks the wounds of loss with
lies :

I do believe she tempted them and fail'd,
She is so bitter : for fine plots may fail,
Tho' harlots paint their talk as well as face
With colors of the heart that are not theirs
I will not let her know : nine tithes of times
Face-flatterers and backbiters are the same.
And they, sweet soul, that most impute a
crime

Are prone to it, and impute themselves,
Wanting the mental rage ; or low desire
Not to feel lowest makes them level all :
Yea, they would pare the mountain to the
plain,

To leave an equal baseness ; and in this
Are harlots like the crowd, that if they find
Some stain or blemish in a name of note,
Not grieving that their greatest are so small,
Inflate themselves with some insane de-
light,

And judge all nature from her feet of clay,
Without the will to lift their eyes, and see
Her godlike head crown'd with spiritual fire,
And touching other worlds. I am weary of
her. ”

He spoke in words part heard, in whispers
part,

Half-suffocated in the hoary fell
And many-winter'd fleece of throat and chin.
But Vivien, gathering somewhat of his mood,
And hearing “ harlot ” mutter'd twice or
thrice,

Leapt from her session on his lap, and stood
Stiff as a viper frozen : loathsome sight,
How from the rosy lips of life and love,
Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of death !
White was her cheek ; sharp breaths of an-
ger puff'd

Her fairy nostril out ; her hand half-clench'd
Went faltering sideways downward to her
belt,

And feeling ; had she found a dagger there
(For in a wink the false love turns to hate)
She would have stabb'd him ; but she found
it not :

His eye was calm ; and suddenly she took
To bitter weeping like a beaten child,
A long, long weeping, not consolable.
Then her false voice made way broken with
sobs.

“ O crueller than was ever told in tale,
Or sung in song ! O vainly lavish'd love !
O cruel, there was nothing wild or strange,
Or seeming shameful, for what shame in love,

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y lavish'd love!
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So love be true, and not as yours is—nothing
Poor Vivien had not done to win his trust
Who call'd her what he call'd her—all her
crime,
All—all—the wish 'o prove him wholly hers."

She mused a little, and then clapt her
hands
Together with a wailing shriek, and said:
"Stabb'd through the heart's affections to
the heart!

Seeth'd like the kid in its own mother's
milk!

Kill'd with a word worse than a life of blows!
I thought that he was gentle, being great:
O God, that I had loved a smaller man!
I should have found in him a greater heart.
O, I, that flattering my true passion, saw
The knights, the court, the king, dark in
your light,

Who loved to make men darker than they are,
Because of that high pleasure which I had
To seat you sole upon my pedestal
Of worship—I am answer'd, and henceforth
The course of life that seem'd so flowery to
me

With you for guide and master, only you,
Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken short,
And ending in a ruin—nothing left,
But into some low cave to crawl, and there,
If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,
Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness."

She paused, she turn'd away, she hung her
head,

The snake of gold slid from her hair, the
braid

Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,
And the dark wood grew darker toward the
storm

In silence, while his anger slowly died
Within him, till he let his wisdom go
For ease of heart, and ha' believed her true:
Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,
"Come from the storm," and havi'g no
reply,

Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and the face
Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or shame;
Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-touching
terms

To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in vain.
At last she let herself be conquer'd by him,
And as the cageling newly flown returns,
The seeming-injured simple-hearted thing
Came to her old perch back, and settled
there.

There while she sat, half-falling from his
knees,

Half-nestled at his heart, and since he saw
The slow tear creep from her closed eyelid
yet,

About her, more in kindness than in love,
The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.

But she dislink'd herself at once and rose,
Her arms upon her breast across, and stood
A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,
Upright and flush'd before him: then she
said;

"There must be now no passages of love
Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore.
Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,
What should be granted which your own
gross heart

Would reckon worth the taking? I will go.
In truth, but one thing now—better have
died

Thrice than have ask'd it once—could make
me stay—

That proof of trust—so often asked in vain!
How justly, after that vile term of yours,
I find with grief! I might believe you then,
Who knows? once more. O, what was once
to me

Mere matter of the fancy, now has grown
The vast necessity of heart and life.
Farewell: think kindly of me, for I fear
My fate or fault, omitting gayer youth
For one so old, must be to love you still.

But ere I leave you let me swear once more
That if I schemed against your peace in this,
May you just heaven, that darkens o'er me,
send

One flash, that, missing all things else, may
make

My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie."

Scarce had she ceased, when out of heaven
a bolt

(For now the storm was close above them)
struck,

Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining
With darted spikes and splinters of the wood
The dark earth round. He raised his eyes
and saw

The tree that shone white-listed thro' the
gloom.

But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard her
oath,

And dazzled by the livid-flickering fork,
And, deafen'd with the stammering cracks
and claps

That follow'd, flying back and crying out,
"O Merlin, tho' you do not love me, save,
Yet save me!" clung to him and hugg'd
him close:

And call'd him dear protector in her fright,
Nor yet forgot her practice in her fright,
But wrought upon his mood and hugg'd him
close.

The pale blood of the wizard at her touch
Took gayer colors, like an opal warm'd

She blamed herself for telling hearsay tales:
She shook from fear, and for her fault she
wept

Of petulance; she call'd him lord and liege,
Her seer, her bard, her silver star of eve,
Her God, her Merlin, the one passionate
love

Of her whole life; and ever overhead
Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten branch

Snap'd in the rushing of the river-rain
Above them; and in change of glare and
gloom

Her eyes and neck glittering went and came;
Till now the storm, its burst of passion spent,
Moaning and calling out of other lands,

Had left the ravaged woodland yet once more
To peace; and what should not have been
had been,

For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,
Had yielded, told her all the charm, and
slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth the
charm
Of woven paces and of waving hands,
And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,
And lost to life and use and name and fame.

Then crying "I have made his glory mine,"
And shrieking out "O fool!" the harlot
leapt

Adown the forest, and the thicket closed.
Behind her, and the forest echo'd "fool."

ELAINE.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
Which first she placed where morning's
earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the
gleam;

Then fearing rust or soilage, fashion'd for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon
All the devices blazon'd on the shield
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by day
Leaving her household and good father
climb'd

That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her
door,

Strip'd off the case, and read the naked shield,
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is
fresh;

That ten years back; this dealt him at Caer-
lyle;

That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:
And ah, God's mercy, what a stroke was
there!

And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but
God

Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy
down,

And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good
shield

Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his
name?

He left it with her, when he rode to tilt
For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,

Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that
name

Had named them, since a diamond was the
prize.

For Arthur when none knew from whence
he came,
Long ere the people chose him for their
king,

Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black
tarn.

A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain side:
For here two brothers, one a king, had met
And fought together: but their names were
lost.

And each had slain his brother at a blow,
And down they fell and made the glen
abhor'd:

And there they lay till all their bones were
bleached,
And lichen'd into color with the crags:

And he that once was king had on a crown
Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.
And Arthur came, and laboring up the pass
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the
skull

Brake from the nape, and from the skull the
crown

Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn:
And down the shingly scarp he plunged, and
caught,

And set it on his head, and in his heart
Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise shalt be
king."

Thereafter, when a king, he had the gems
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to
his knights,

Saying "These jewels, whereupon I chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the king's—
For public use: henceforward let there be,
Once every year, a joust for one of these:
For so by nine years' proof we needs must
learn

Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall
grow

In use of arms and manhood, till we drive
The Heathen, who, some say, shall rule the
land

Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus he
spoke:

And eight years past, eight jousts had been,
and still

Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,
With purpose to present them to the Queen,
When all were won: but meaning all at once
To snare her royal fancy with a boon
Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last
And largest, Arthur, holding then his court
Hard on the river nigh the place which now
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
Spake (for she had been sick) to Guinevere,
"Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot
move

To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord," she
said, "you know it,"

none knew from whence

he chose him for their

realms of Lyonesse,
gray boulder and black

the tarn, and clave
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sick) to Guinevere,
Queen, you cannot

"Yea, lord," she
,"

"Then will you miss," he answer'd, "the
great deeds
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
A sight you love to look on." And the Queen
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the
King.

He thinking that he read her meaning there,
"Stay with me, I am sick : my love is more
Than many diamonds," yielded, and a heart,
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen
(However much he yearn'd to make complete
The tale of diamonds for his destined boon)
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say
"Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly
whole,

And lets me from the saddle " : and the King
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his
way.

No sooner gone than suddenly she began :

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to
blame.

Why go you not to these fair jousts? the
knights
Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd
Will murmur, lo the shameless ones, who
take

Their pastime now the trustful king is gone !"
Then Lancelot, vex'd at having lied in vain :
"Are you so wise? you were not once so wise,
My Queen, that summer, when you loved me
first.

Then of the crowd you took no more account
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
When its own voice clings to each blade of
grass,

And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
Them surely can I silence with all ease.
But now my loyal worship is allow'd
Of all men : many a bard, without offence,
Has link'd our names together in his lay,
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty : and our knights at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while the King
Would listen smiling. How then? is there
more?

Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?"

She broke into a little scornful laugh.

"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,
That passionate perfection, my good lord—
But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to me,
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
He cares not for me : only here to-day
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his eyes :
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with
him—else

Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
And swearing men to vows impossible,
To make them like himself: but, friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at all :
For who loves me must have a touch of earth ;
The low sun makes the color : I am yours,
Not Arthur's, as you know, save by the bond,

And therefore hear my words: go to the
jousts :
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our
dream

When sweetest ; and the vermin voices here
May buzz so loud — we scorn them, but they
sing."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of
knights,

"And with what face, after my pretext
made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a king who honors his own word,
As if it were his God's?"

"Yea," said the Queen,
"A moral child without the craft to rule,
Else had he not lost me : but listen to me,
If I must find you wit : we hear it said
That men go down before your spear at a
touch

But knowing you are Lancelot ; your great
name,
This conquers : hide it therefore ; go un-
known :

Win ! by this kiss you will : and our true
king

Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
As all for glory ; for to speak him true,
You know right well, how meek so e'er he
seem,

No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than him-
self :

They prove to him his work : win and re-
turn."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
Wroth at himself : not willing to be known,
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer
foot,

And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way :
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
That all in loops and links among the
dales

Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the tower.
Thither he made and wound the gateway
horn,

Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled
man,

Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.
And Lancelot marvel'd at the wordless
man :

And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir
Lavaine,

Moving to meet him in the castle court :
And close behind them stept the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter : mother of the house
There was not : some light jest among them
rose

With laughter dying down as the great
knight

Approach'd them : then the Lord of Asto-
lat,

"Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name
 Liest between the lips? for by thy state
 And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
 After the king, who eat in Arthur's halls.
 Him have I seen: the rest, his Table Round,
 Known as they are, to me they are unknown."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights,
 "Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
 What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
 But since I go to joust as one unknown
 At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,
 Hereafter you shall know me — and the shield —
 I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
 Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat, "Here is Torre's:
 Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.
 And, so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
 His you can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,
 "Yea since I cannot use it, you may have it."
 Here laugh'd the father, saying, "Fie, Sir Churl,
 Is that an answer for a noble knight?
 Allow him: but Lorraine my younger here,
 He is so full of lusthood, he will ride
 Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour
 And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
 To make her thrice as wilful as before."

"Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me not
 Before this noble knight," said young Lorraine,
 "For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre:
 He seem'd so sullen, vex'd he could not go:
 A jest, no more: for, knight, the maiden dreamt
 That some one put this diamond in her hand,
 And that it was too slippery to be held,
 And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
 The castle-well, belike: and then I said
 That if I went and if I fought and won it
 (But all was jest and joke among ourselves)
 Then must she keep it safer. All was jest.
 But father give me leave, an-if he will,
 To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:
 Win shall I not, but do my best to win:
 Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So you will grace me," answer'd Lancelot,

Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship
 O'er these waste downs whereon I lost my self,
 Then were I glad of you as guide and friend:
 And you shall win this diamond — as I hear,
 It is a fair large diamond, — if you may,
 And yield it to this maiden, if you will."
 "A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre,
 "Such be for Queens and not for simple maids."
 Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
 Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
 Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement
 Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
 Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:
 "If what is fair be but for what is fair,
 And only Queens are to be counted so,
 Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid
 Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
 Not violating the bond of like to like."

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid Elaine,
 Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
 Lifted her eyes, and read her lineaments.
 The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
 In battle with the love he bare his lord,
 Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.
 Another sinning on such heights with one,
 The flower of all the west and all the world,
 Had been the sleeker for it: but in him
 His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
 And drove him into wastes and solitudes
 For agony, who was yet a living soul.
 Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man,
 That ever among ladies ate in Hall,
 And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
 However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
 Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,
 And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
 And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
 Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
 Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
 Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
 But kindly man moving among his kind:
 Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
 And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.
 And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
 And ever well and readily answer'd he:
 But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,

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answer'd he:
y glanced at Guine-

Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,
Heard from the Baron that, ten years be-

fore,
The heathen caught and reft him of his
tongue.

"He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce de-

sign
Against my house, and him they caught and

maim'd:
But I my sons and little daughter fled

From bonds or death, and dwelt among the
woods

By the great river in a boatman's hut.
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur

broke
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."

"O there, good Lord, doubtless," Lavaine
said, rapt

By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
Toward greatness in its elder, "you have
fought.

O tell us: for we live apart, you know
Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot

spoke
And answer'd him at full, as having been

With Arthur in the fight which all day long
Rang by the white mouth of the violent

Glem;
And in the four wild battles by the shore

Of Douglas; that on Bassa; then the war.
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts

Of Celidon the forest; and again
By castle Gurnion where the glorious King

Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
Carved of one emerald, centred in a sun

Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;
And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,

When the strong neighings of the wild white
Horse

Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
And up in Agned Cathregonion too,

And down the waste sand-shores of Trath
Teroit,

Where many a heathen fell; "and on the
mount

Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,

And all his legions crying Christ and him,
And break them; and I saw him, after, stand

High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,

And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
'They are broken, they are broken' for the

King,
However mild he seems at home, nor cares

For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts —
For if his own knight cast him down, he

laughs
Saying, his knights are better men than he —

Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
Fills him; I never saw his like; there lives

No greater leader."

While he utter'd this,
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,

"Save your great self, fair lord"; and when
he fell

From talk of war to traits of pleasantry

Being mirthful he but in a stately kind —
She still took note that when the living smile

Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
Of melancholy severe, from which again,

Whenever in her hovering to and fro
The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,

There broke a sudden-beaming tenderness
Of manners and of nature: and she thought

That all was nature, all, perchance, for her,
And all night long his face before her lived,

As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man

Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and color of a mind and life,

Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest; so the face before her lived,

Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.

Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the
thought

She needs must bid farewell to sweet
Lavaine.

First as in fear, step after step, she stole,
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:

Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the
court,

"This shield, my friend, where is it?" and
Lavaine

Past inward, as she came from out the tower.
There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd,

and smooth'd
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself

Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more

amazed
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw

The maiden standing in the dewy light.
He had not dreamed she was so beautiful.

Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood

Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.
Suddenly flashed on her a wild desire,

That he should wear her favor at the tilt.
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.

"Fair lord, whose name I know not — noble
it is,

I well believe, the noblest — will you wear
My favor at this tourney?" "Nay," said

he,
"Fair lady, since I never yet have worn

Favor of any lady in the lists.
Such is my wont, as those, who know me,

know."
"Yea, so," she answer'd; "then in wearing

mine
Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,

That those who know should know you."
And he turn'd

Her counsel up and down within his mind,
And found it true, and answer'd, "True, my

child.
Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:

What is it?" and she told him "a red
sleeve

Broider'd with pearls," and brought it: then
he bound

Her token on his helmet, with a smile
Saying, "I never yet have done so much

For any maiden living," and the blood
Sprang to her face, and fill'd her with de-
light;

But left her all the paler, when Lavaine
Returning brought the yet unblazon'd shield,
His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine;
"Do me this grace, my child, to have my
shield

In keeping till I come." "A grace to me,"
She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am your
Squire."

Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, "Lily
maid,

For fear our people call you lily maid
In earnest, let me bring your color back;
Once, twice, and thrice: now get you hence
to bed";

So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own
hand,

And thus they moved away: she stay'd a
minute,

Then made a sudden step to the gate, and
there—

Her bright hair blown about the serious face
Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—
Paused in the gateway, standing by the
shield

In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-
off

Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.
Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the
shield,

There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past away
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a
knight

Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and pray'd
And ever laboring had scoop'd himself
In the white rock a chapel and a hall
On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,
And cells and chambers: all were fair and
dry;

The green light from the meadows under-
neath

Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
And thither wending there that night they
bode.

But when the next day broke from under-
ground,
And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode
away:

Then Lancelot saying, "Hear, but hold my
name

Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,"
Abashed Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
Dearer to true young hearts than their own
praise,

But left him leave to stammer, "Is it indeed?"
And after muttering "the great Lancelot"

At last he got his breath and answer'd, "One,

One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's king of kings,
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
He will be there—then were I stricken blind
That minute, I might say that I had seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd
the lists

By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
Run thro' the peopled gallery which half
round

Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,
Until they found the clear-faced King, who
sat

Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
And from the carven-work behind him crept
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
Thro' knots and loops and folds innume-
rable

Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found
The new design wherein they lost themselves,
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work:
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine
and said,

"Me you call great: mine is the firmer seat,
The truer lance: but there is many a youth
Now crescent, who will come to all I am
And overcome it; and in me there dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
Of greatness to know well I am not great:
There is the man." And Lavaine gaped up-
on him

As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew; and then did either side,
They that assailed, and they that held the
lists,

Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
Shock, that a man far-off might well perceive,
If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of
arms.

And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
Which were the weaker: then he hurl'd into it
Against the stronger: little need to speak
Of Lancelot in his glory: King, duke, earl,
Count, baron—whom he smote, he over-
threw.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and
kin,

Ranged with the Table Round that held the
lists,

Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger
knight

Should do and almost overdo the deeds
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other, "Lo!

What is he? I do not mean the force alone,
The grace and versatility of the man—

Is it not Lancelot?" "When has Lancelot
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Not such his went, as we, that know him,
know."

"How then? who then?" a fury seized on
them,

A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.

They couch'd their spears and prick'd their
steeds and thus,

Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind
they made

In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wild North-sea,

Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears,
with all

Its stormy crests that smote against the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,

And him that helms it, so they overbore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear

Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head

Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt, and
remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worship-
fully;

He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he

lay.

He up the side, sweating with agony, got,
But thought to do while he might yet endure

And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party,—tho' it seemed half-miracle

To those he fought with—dave his kith and
kin,

And all the Table Round that held the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the heralds blew

Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the
sleeve

Of scarlet, and the pearls: and all the knights
His party, cried "Advance, and take your

prize

The diamond"; but he answer'd, "Diamond
me

No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!

Hence will I and I charge you, follow me
not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the
field

With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,

Gasping to Sir Lavaine, "Draw the lance-
head":

"Ah, my sweet lord, Sir Lancelot," said La-
vaine,

"I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."
But he, "I die already with it: draw—

Draw"—and Lavaine drew, and that other
gave

A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and down he

sank

For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.
Then came the hermit out and bare him in,

There stanch'd his wound; and there, in
daily doubt

Whether to live or die, for many a week

Hid from the wide world's rumor by the
grove

Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the
lists,

His party, knights of utmost North and
West,

Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate
isles,

Came round their great Pendragon, saying
to him,

"Lo, Sire, our knight thro' whom we won
the day

Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his
prize

Untaken, crying that his prize is death."
"Heaven hinder," said the King, "that

such an one,

So great a knight as we have seen to-day—
He seem'd to me another Lancelot—

Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—
He must not pass uncared for. Gawain, rise,

My nephew, and ride forth and find the
knight.

Wounded and wearied, needs must he be
near.

I charge you that you get at once to horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes not

one of you

Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given:
His prowess was too wondrous. We will do

him

No customary honor: since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,

Ourselves will send it after. Wherefore take
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,

And bring us what he is and how he fares,
And cease not from your quest, until you

find."

So saying from the carven flower above,
To which it made a restless heart, he took,

And gave, the diamond: then from where he
sat

At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince

In the mid might and flourish of his May,
Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and

strong.

And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint
And Lamorack, a good knight, but there-
withal

Sir Modred's brother, of a crafty house,
Nor often loyal to his word, and now

Wroth that the king's command to sally forth
In quest of whom he knew not, made him

leave

The banquet, and concourse of knights and
kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and
went;

While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
Past, thinking, "Is it Lancelot who has come

Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
Of glory, and has added wound to wound,

And ridd'n away to die?" So fear'd the King,
 And, after two days' tarriance there, return'd.
 Then when he saw the Queen, embracing,
 ask'd,
 "Love, are you yet so sick?" "Nay, lord," she said.
 "And where is Lancelot?" Then the Queen amazed,
 "Was he not with you? won he not your prize?"
 "Nay, but one like him." "Why that like was he."
 And when the King demanded how she knew,
 Said, "Lord, no sooner had you parted from us,
 Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
 That men went down before his spear at a touch,
 But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name
 Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide his name
 From all men, e'en the king, and to this end
 Had made the pretext of a hindering wound.
 That he might joust unknown of all, and learn
 If his old prowess were in aught decay'd:
 And added, 'Our true Arthur, when he learns,
 Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
 Of purer glory.'"
 Then replied the King:
 "Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
 In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
 To have trusted me as he has trusted you.
 Surely his king and most familiar friend
 Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,
 Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
 So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
 Must needs have moved my laughter: now remains
 But little cause for laughter: his own kin —
 Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, these!
 His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him:
 So that he went sore wounded from the field:
 Yet good news too: for goodly hopes are mine
 That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
 He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
 A sleeve of scarlet, brodered with great pearls,
 Some gentle maiden's gift."
 "Vea, lord," she said,
 "Your hopes are mine," and saying that she choked,
 And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,
 Moved to her chamber, and there flung herself
 Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it,
 And clench'd her fingers till they bit the palm,
 And shriek'd out "traitor" to the unhearing wall,
 Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,
 And moved about her palace, proud and pale.
 Gawain the while thro' all the region round
 Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
 Touch'd at all points, except the poplar grove,
 And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat:
 Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid
 Glanced at, and cried "What news from Camelot, lord?"
 What of the knight with the red sleeve?"
 "He won."
 "I knew it," she said. "But parted from the jousts
 Hurt in the side," whereat she caught her breath.
 Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go;
 Thereon she smote her hand: wellnigh she swoon'd:
 And while he gazed wonderingly at her, came
 The lord of Astolat out, to whom the Prince
 Reported who he was, and on what quest
 Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find
 The victor, but had ridden wildly round
 To seek him, and was wearied of the search.
 To whom the lord of Astolat, "Bide with us,
 And ride no longer wildly, noble Prince!
 Here was the knight, and here he left a shield;
 This will he send or come for: furthermore
 Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,
 Needs must we hear." To this the courteous Prince
 Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
 Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
 And stay'd; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine:
 Where could be found face daintier? then her shape
 From forehead down to foot perfect — again
 From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd:
 "Well — if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!"
 And oft they met among the garden yews,
 And there he set himself to play upon her
 With sallying wit, free flashes from a height
 Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
 Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence
 And amorous adulation, till the maid
 Rebel'd against it, saying to him, "Prince,
 O loyal nephew of our noble King,
 Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
 Whence you might learn his name? Why slight your King,
 And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove
 No surer than our falcon yesterday,
 Who lost the hern we slapt him at, and went
 To all the winds?" "Nay, by mine head," said he,
 "I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
 O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes:
 But an you will it let me see the shield."
 And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw
 Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,
 Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh and mock'd;

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"Right was the King! our Lancelot! that
true man!"

"And right was I," she answer'd merrily, "I,
Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight
of all."

"And if I dream'd," said Gawain, "that you
love

This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, you
know it!

Speak therefore: shall I waste myself in
vain?"

Full simple was her answer: "What know I?
My brethren have been all my fellowship,
And I, when often they have talk'd of love,
Wish'd it had been my mother, for they
talk'd,

Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so my-
self—

I know not if I know what true love is,
But if I know, then, if I love not him,
Methinks there is none other I can love."

"Yea, by God's death," said he, "you love
him well,

But would not, knew you what all others
know,

And whom he loves." "So be it," cried
Elaine,

And lifted her fair face and moved away:
But he pursued her calling, "Stay a little!
One golden minute's grace: he wore your
sleeve:

Would he break faith with one I may not
name?

Must our true man change like a leaf at last?
May it be so? why then, far be it from me
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!

And, damsel, for I deem you know full well
Where your great knight is hidden, let me
leave

My quest with you: the diamond also: here I
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
From your own hand; and whether he love
or not,

A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
A thousand times! — a thousand times fare-
well!

Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
May meet at court hereafter: there, I think,
So you will learn the courtesies of the court,
We two shall know each other."

Then he gave,
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he
gave,

The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there told
the King

What the King knew, "Sir Lancelot is the
knight."

And added, "Sire, my liege, so much I
learnt;

But fail'd to find him tho' I rode all round
The region: but I lighted on the maid,
Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him; and
to her,

Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,
I gave the diamond: she will render it;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-
place."

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and
replied,

"Too courteous truly! you shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that you forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth but all in
awe,

For twenty strokes of the blood, without a
word,

Linger'd that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd
abroad

About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues
were loosed:

"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's,
and all

Had marvel what the maid might be, but
most

Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp
news:

She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd
so low,

Marr'd her friend's point with pale tranqui-
lity.

So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine days' wonder flared:
Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen who
sat

With lips severely placid felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats be-
came

As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and
said,

"Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?"

"Nay," said he, "surely." "Wherefore let
me hence,"

She answer'd, "and find out our dear La-
vaine."

"You will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:
Bide," answer'd he: "we needs must hear
anon

Of him, and of that other." "Ay," she said,
"And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, whereso'er he be,

And with mine own hand give his diamond
to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud Prince who left the quest to
me.

Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.
The gentler-born the maiden, the more
bound,

My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as you know,
When these have worn their tokens: let me
hence

I pray you." Then her father nodding said,
"Ay, ay, the diamond: wit you well, my
child,

Right fain were I to learn this knight were
whole,

Being our greatest: yea, and you must give
it—

And sure I think this fruit is hung too high
For any mouth to gape for save a Queen's—
Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you gone,
Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slept away,
And while she made her ready for her ride,
Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,
"Being so very wilful you must go,"
And changed itself and echoed in her heart,
"Being so very wilful you must die."
But she was happy enough and shook it off,
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;
And in her heart she answer'd it and said,
"What matter, so I help him back to life?"
Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless
downs

To Camelot, and before the city-gates
Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flowers:
Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she cried,
"Lavaine,

How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He
amazed,
"Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!
lot!

How know you my lord's name is Lancelot?"
But when the maid had told him all her tale,
Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his
moods

Left them, and under the strange-statued
gate,

Where Arthur's wars were render'd mysti-
cally,

Past up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot;
And her Lavaine across the poplar grove
Led to the caves: there first she saw the
casque

Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet sleeve,
Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls
away,

Stream'd from it still; and in her heart she
laugh'd,

Because he had not loosed it from his helm,

But meant once more perchance to tourney
in it.

And when they gain'd the cell in which he
slept,

His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream
Of dragging down his enemy made them
move.

Then she that saw him lying unsleek, un-
shorn,

Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.

The sound not wonted in a place so still
Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd
his eyes

Yet blank from sleep, she started to him,
saying,

"Your prize the diamond sent you by the
King":

His eyes glisten'd: she fancied "is it for
me?"

And when the maid had told him all the tale
Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the
quest

Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,

And laid the diamond in his open hand.
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child

That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her
face.

At once she slept like water to the floor.
"Alas," he said, "your ride has wearied you.

Rest must you have." "No rest for me,"
she said;

"Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."
What might she mean by that? his large
black eyes,

Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,
Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself

In the heart's colors on her simple face;
And Lancelot look'd and was perplex in
mind,

And being weak in body said no more;
But did not love the color; woman's love,

Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the
fields,

And past beneath the wildly-sculptured gates
Far up the dim rich city to her kin;

There bode the night: but woke with dawn,
and past

Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
Thence to the cave: so day by day she past

In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
Gliding, and every day she tended him,

And likewise many a night: and Lancelot
Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt

Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times
Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem

Uncourteous, even he: but the meek maid
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him

Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
Milder than any mother to a sick child,

And never woman yet, since man's first fall,
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love

Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all

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The simples and the science of that time,
Told him that her fine care had saved his
life.

And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
Would call her friend and sister, sweet
Elaine,

Would listen for her coming and regret
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
And loved her with all love except the
love

Of man and woman when they love their
best
Closest and sweetest, and had died the
death

In any knightly fashion for her sake.
And peradventure had he seen her first
She might have made this and that other
world

Another world for the sick man; but now
The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,
His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness
made

Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.
These, as but born of sickness, could not
live:

For when the blood ran lustier in him
again,

Full often the sweet image of one face,
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.

Then if the maiden, while that ghostly
grace

Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,
Or short and coldly, and she knew right
well

What the rough sickness meant, but what
this meant

She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her
sight,

And drove her ere her time across the
fields

Far into the rich city, where alone
She murmur'd, "Vain, in vain: it cannot be.
He will not love me: how then? must I
die?"

Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
That has but one plain passage of few
notes,

Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, "Must I
die?"

And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,
And found no ease in turning or in rest:
And "him or death" she mutter'd, "death
or him,"

Again and like a burthen, "him or death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was
whole,

To Astolat returning rode the three.

There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self
In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her
best,

She came before Sir Lancelot, for she
thought

"If I be loved, these are my festal robes,
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."

And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid
That she should ask some goodly gift of
him

For her own self or hers; "and do not shun
To speak the wish most near to your true
heart;

Such service have you done me, that I
make

My will of yours, and Prince and Lord
am I

In mine own land, and what I will I can."
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to
speak,

And Lancelot saw that she withheld her
wish,

And bode among them yet a little space,
Till he should learn it; and one morn it
chanced

He found her in among the garden yews,
And said, "Delay no longer, speak your
wish,

Seeing I must go to-day": then out she
brake;

"Going? and we shall never see you more.
And I must die for want of one bold word."

"Speak: that I live to hear," he said, "is
yours."

Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:
"I have gone mad. I love you: let me
die."

"Ah sister," answer'd Lancelot, "what is
this?"

And innocently extending her white arms,
"Your love," she said, "your love—to be
your wife."

And Lancelot answer'd, "Had I chos'n to
wed,

I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine:
But now there never will be wife of mine."

"No, no," she cried, "I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still, to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the
world."

And Lancelot answer'd, "Nay, the world,
the world,

All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a
tongue

To blare its own interpretation—nay,
Full ill then should I quit your brother's
love,

And your good father's kindness." And she
said,

"Not to be with you, not to see your face,
Alas for me then, my good days are done."

"Nay, noble maid," he answer'd, "ten
times nay!

This is not love: but love's first flash in
youth,

Most common: yea, I know it of mine own
self:

And you yourself will smile at your own
self

Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age :
And then will I, for true you are and sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
More specially should your good knight be
poor,

Endow you with broad land and territory
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
So that would make you happy ; further-
more,

Ev'n to the death, as tho' you were my
blood,

In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke
She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-
pale

Stood grasping what was nearest, then re-
plied,

"Of all this will I nothing"; and so fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to her
tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black
walls of yew
Their talk had pierced, her father, "Ay, a
flash,
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
Too courteous are you, fair Lord Lancelot.
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,
"That were against me; what I can I
will";

And there that day remain'd, and toward
even

Sent for his shield : full meekly rose the
maid,

Stript off the case, and gave the naked
shield ;

Then, when she heard his horse upon the
stones,

Unclasping flung the casement back, and
look'd

Down on his helm, from which her sleeve
had gone.

And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound :
And she by tact of love was well aware

That Lancelot knew that she was looking at
him.

And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his
hand,

Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat :
His very shield was gone : only the case,
Her own poor work, her empty labor, left.

But still she heard him, still his picture
form'd

And grew between her and the pictured wall.
Then came her father, saying in low tones

"Have comfort," whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, "Peace to
thee

Sweet sister," whom she answer'd with all
calm.

But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
Approaching thro' the darkness, called ; the
owls

Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
Her fancies with the sorrow-rifted glooms
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And call'd her song "The Song of Love and
Death,"

And sang it : sweetly could she make and
sing.

"Sweet is true love, tho' given in vain, in
vain ;

And sweet is death who puts an end to pain :
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet ? then bitter death
must be :

Love, thou art bitter ; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet Love, that seems not made to fade
away,

Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless
clay,

I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could be ;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me ;
Call and I follow, I follow ! let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice, and
this,

All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard,

and thought
With shuddering, "Hark the Phantom of
the house

That ever shrieks before a death," and
call'd

The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo ! the blood-red light of
dawn

Flared on her face, she shrilling "Let me
die !"

As when we dwell upon a word we know
Repeating, till the word we know so well

Becomes a wonder and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face and thought

"Is this Elaine?" till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,

Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
At last she said, "Sweet brothers, yester-
night

I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the
woods,

And when you used to take me with the
flood

Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only you would not pass beyond the cape

That has the poplar on it : there you fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the tide

And yet I cried because you would not pass

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you would not pass

Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the king.
And yet you would not ; but this night I
dream'd
That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, ' Now shall I have my
will ' :
And there I woke, but still the wish re-
main'd.

So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the king.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock at me ;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me ;
Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to me,
Lancelot, who coldly went nor bade me one :
And there the King will know me and my
love,

And there the Queen herself will pity me,
And all the gentle court will welcome me,
And after my long voyage I shall rest ! "

" Peace," said her father, " O my child,
you seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go.
So far, being sick? and wherefore would you
look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us
all? "

Then the rough Torre began to heave and
moan,

And bluster into stormy sobs and say,
" I never loved him : an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him
down.

Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the house."

To which the gentle sister made reply,
" Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be
wroth,

Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
Not to love me, than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the high-
est."

" Highest? " the Father answer'd, echoing
" highest."

(He meant to break the passion in her.)
" Nay,

Daughter, I know not what you call the high-
est ;

But this I know, for all the people know it,
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame :
And she returns his love in open shame.
If this be high, what is to be low? "

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat :
" Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
For anger : these are slanders : never yet
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain : so let me pass,
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,

Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
And greatest, tho' my love had no return :
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
Thanks, but you work against your own de-
sire ;
For if I could believe the things you say
I should but die the sooner : wherefore cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and
gone,
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word ; and when he ask'd
" Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
Then will I bear it gladly " ; she replied,
" For Lancelot and the Queen and all the
world.

But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote
The letter she devised ; which being writ
And folded, " O sweet father, tender and
true,

Deny me not," she said — " you never yet
Denied my fancies — this, however strange,
My latest : lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it ; I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat is gone from out my
heart,

Then take the little bed on which I died
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the
Queen's

For richness, and me also like the Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
And none of you can speak for me so well.
And therefore let our dumb old man alone
Go with me, he can steer and row, and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

She ceased : her father promised ; where-
upon
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her
death

Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
But ten slow mornings past, and on the elev-
enth

Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from under-
ground,
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent
brows

Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the
barge,

Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.

So those two brethren from the chariot took
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
The silken case with braided blazonings,
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to
her,

"Sister, farewell forever," and again,
"Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the
dead
Steer'd by the dumb went upward with the
flood—

In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter—all her bright hair streaming
down—

And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
Hard won and hardly won with bruise and
blow,

With deaths of others, and almost his own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for he
saw

One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
With such and so unmoved a majesty
She might have seem'd her statue, but that
he,

Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her
feet

For fowl awe, saw with a sidelong eye
The shadow of a piece of pointed lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the
stream,

They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd
Queen,

Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
Take, what I had not won except for you,
These jewels, and make me happy, making
them

An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are
words:

Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in
words

Perchance, we both can pardon: but, my
Queen,

I hear of rumors flying thro' your court.
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
Should have in it an absolute trust
To make up that defect: let rumors be:
When did not rumors fly? these, as I trust
That you trust me in your own nobleness,
I may not well believe that you believe."

While thus he spoke, half turned away, the
Queen

Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood was
green;

Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive
hand
Received at once and laid aside the gems
There on a table near her, and replied:

"It may be, I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite and
wrong

To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?
Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their
worth

Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!
For her! for your new fancy. Only this
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys apart.
I doubt not that however changed, you keep
So much of what is graceful: and myself
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy
In which as Arthur's queen I move and rule:
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!

A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;
Deck her with these; tell her, she shines me
down:

An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
O as much fairer—as a faith once fair
Was richer than these diamonds—hers not
mine—

Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will—
She shall not have them."

Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing wide for
heat,

Flung them, and down they flash'd, and
smote the stream.

Then from the smitten surface flash'd as it
were,

Diamonds to meet them, and they past away.
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disgust
At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,
Close underneath his eyes, and right across
Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst
away

To weep and wail in secret; and the barge
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
There two stood arm'd, and kept the door;
to whom,

All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes
that ask'd

"What is it?" but that oarsman's haggard face,

As hard and still as is the face that men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks
On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they
said,

"He is enchanted, cannot speak — and she,
Look how she sleeps — the Fairy Queen, so
fair!

Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh and
blood?

Or come to take the King to fairy land?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
But that he passes into fairy land."

While thus they babbled of the King, the
King

Came girt with knights: then turn'd the
tongueless man

From the half-face to the full eye, and rose
And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;
And reverently they bore her into hall.

Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at
her,

And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
At last the Queen herself and pitied her:
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stooped, took, brake seal, and read; this
was all:

"Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my
death.

And therefore to our lady Guinevere,
And to all other ladies, I make moan.
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless."

Thus he read,
And ever in the readings lords and dames
Wept, looking often from his face who read
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her
lips,

Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all:
"My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden's
death

Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.

Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
No cause, not willingly, for such a love:
To this I call my friends in testimony.

Her brethren, and her father, who himself
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature: what I could, I did.

I left her and I bade her no farewell.

Tho' had I dreamt the damsel would have
died,

I might have put my wits to some rough use,
And help'd her from herself."

Then said the Queen
(Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm),
"You might at least have done her so much
grace,

Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her
death."

He raised his head, their eyes met and hers
fell,

He adding,

"Queen, she would not be content
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
Then might she follow me thro' the world,
she ask'd;

It could not be. I told her that her love
Was but the flash of youth, would darken
down

To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her — then
would I,

More specially were he, she wedded, poor,
Estate them with large land and territory
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
To keep them in all joyance: more than
this

I could not; this she would not, and she
died."

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, "O my
knight,

It will be to your worship, as my knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the
realm

Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
The marshal'd order of their Table Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a Queen.
And when the knights had laid her comely
head

Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
Then Arthur spake among them, "Let her
tomb

Be costly, and her image thereupon.
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.

And let the story of her dolorous voyage
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb
In letters gold and azure!" which was
wrought

Thereafter; but when now the lords and
dames

And people, from the high door streaming,
brake

Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved
apart,

Drew near, and sigh'd in passing "Lancelot,
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love."
He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,

"That is love's curse ; pass on, my Queen,
forgiven."
But Arthur who beheld his cloudy brows
Approach'd him, and with full affection flung
One arm about his neck, and spake and
said :

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I
have
Most joy and most affiance, for I know
What thou hast been in battle by my side,
And many a time have watch'd thee at the
tilt
Strike down the lusty and long-practised
knight,
And let the younger and unskill'd go by
To win his honor and to make his name,
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man
Made to be loved ; — but now I would to
God,
For the wild people say wild things of thee,
Thou couldst have loved this maiden,
shaped, it seems,
By God for thee alone, and from her face,
If one may judge the living by the dead,
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely
man
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the
Lake."

Then answer'd Lancelot, "Fair she was,
my King,
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
To doubt her pureness were to want a
heart, —
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
Could bind him, but free love will not be
bound."

"Free love, so bound, were freest," said
the King.
"Let love be free ; free love is for the best :
And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
What should be best, if not so pure a love
Clothed in so pure a loveliness ? yet thee
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he
went,
And at the inrunning of a little brook
Sat by the river in a cove and watch'd
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
And saw the barge that brought her moving
down,
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
Low in himself, "Ah simple heart and
sweet,
You loved me, damsel, surely with a love
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for
thy soul ?
Ay, that will I. Farewell too — now at
last —
Farewell, fair lily. 'Jealousy in love' ?

Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous
pride ?

Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
May not your crescent fear for name and
fame

Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes ?
Why did the King dwell on my name to me ?
Mine own name shames me, seeming a
reproach,

Lancelot, whom the Lady of the lake
Stole from his mother — as the story runs —
She chanted snatches of mysterious song
Heard on the winding waters, eye and morn
She kiss'd me saying thou art fair, my child,
As a king's son, and often in her arms
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it
be !

For what am I ? what profits me my name
Of greatest knight ? I fought for it, and have
it :

Pleasure to have it, none ; to lose it, pain :
Now grown a part of me : but what use in it ?
To make men worse by making my sin
known ?

Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great ?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart ! I needs must
break

These bonds that so defame me : not without
She wills it : would I, if she will'd it ? nay,
Who knows ? but if I would not, then may
God,

I pray him, send a sudden Angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills."

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

GUINEVERE.

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court, and
sat

There in the holy house at Almesbury
Weeping, none with her save a little maid,
A novice : one low light betwixt them burn'd
Blur'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was
still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight
Sir Modred ; he the nearest to the King,
His nephew, ever like a subtle beast
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,
Ready to spring, waiting a chance : for this,
He chill'd the popular praises of the King,
With silent smiles of slow disparagement ;
And tamper'd with the Lords of the White
Horse,
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left ; and
sought

To make disruption in the Table Round
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds

Serving his traitorous end ; and all his aims
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when all the
court,
Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd
the May,
Had been, their wont, a-maying and return'd,
That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,
Climb'd to the high top of the garden wall
To spy some secret scandal if he might,
And saw the Queen, who sat betwixt her best
Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court
The wildest and the worst ; and more than
this

He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by
Spied where he couch'd, and as the garden-
er's hand
Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,
So from the high wall and the flowering grove
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the heel,
And cast him as a worm upon the way ;
But when he knew the Prince tho' marr'd
with dust,

He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,
Made such excuses as he might, and these
Full knightly without scorn ; for in those days
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn ;
But, if a man were halt or hunch'd, in him
By those whom God had made full-limb'd
and tall,

Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,
And he was answer'd softly by the King
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot help
To raise the Prince, who rising twice or thrice
Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled,
and went :

But, ever after, the small violence done
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long
A little bitter pool about a stone
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
This matter to the Queen, at first she laugh'd
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,
Then shudder'd, as the village wife who cries
" I shudder, some one steps across my
grave ;"

Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for indeed
She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,
Would track her guilt until he found, and
hers

Would be forevermore a name of scorn.
Henceforward rarely could she front in Hall,
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye :
Henceforward too, the Powers that tend the
soul,

To help it from the death that cannot die,
And save it even in extremes, began
To vex and plague her. Many a time for
hours,

Beside the placid breathings of the King,
In the dead night, grin faces came and went :
Before her, or a vague spiritual fear—
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking
doors,

Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,

That keeps the rust of murder on the walls—
Held her awake ; or if she slept, she dream'd
An awful dream ; for then she seem'd to stand
On some vast plain before a setting sun,
And from the sun there swiftly made at her
A ghastly something, and its shadow flew
Before her, till it touch'd her, and she
turn'd—

When lo ! her own, that broadening from
her feet,
And blackening, swallow'd all the land, and
in it

Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.
And all this trouble did not pass but grew ;
Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless King,
And trustful courtesies of household life,
Became her bane ; and at the last she said,
" O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own
land,

For if thou tarriest we shall meet again,
And if we meet again some evil chance
Will make the smouldering scandal break
and blaze

Before the people, and our lord the King."
And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,
And still they met and met. Again she said,
" O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence,"
And then they were agreed upon a night
(When the good King should not be there)
to meet

And part forever. Passion-pale they met
And greeted : hands in hands, and eye to eye,
Low on the border of her couch they sat
Stammering and staring ; it was their last
hour,

A madness of farewells. And Modred
brought

His creatures to the basement of the tower
For testimony ; and crying with full voice,
" Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,"
aroused

Lancelot, who rushing outward lion-like
Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong, and
he fell

Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare him
off

And all was still : then she, " The end is
come

And I am shamed forever " ; and he said,
" Mine be the shame ; mine was the sin ; but
rise,

And fly to my strong castle overseas ;
There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,
There hold thee with my life against the
world."

She answer'd, " Lancelot, wilt thou hold me
so ?

Nay friend, for we have taken our farewells.
Would God, that thou couldst hide me from
myself !

Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou
Unwedded : yet rise now, and let us fly,
For I will draw me into sanctuary,
And bide my doom." So Lancelot got her
horse,

Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,
And then they rode to the divided way,
There kiss'd, and parted weeping : for he past

Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,
Back to his land; but she to Almesbury
Fled all night long by glimmering waste and
weald,

And heard the Spirits of the waste and weald
Moan as she fled, or thought she heard them
moan:

And in herself she moan'd, "Too late, too
late!"

Till in the cold wind that foreruns the morn.
A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying high,
Croak'd, and she thought, "He spies a field
of death;

For now the heathen of the Northern Sea,
Lured by the crimes and frailties of the court,
Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the land."

And when she came to Almesbury she
spake

There to the nuns, and said, "Mine enemies
Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,
Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor ask
Her name, to whom ye yield it, till her time
To tell you": and her beauty, grace, and
power

Wrought as a charm upon them; and they
spared

To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode
For many a week, unknown, among the nuns;
Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name, nor
sought,

Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for shrift,
But communed only with the little maid,
Who pleased her with a babbling heedless-
ness

Which often lured her from herself; but now,
This night, a rumor wildly blown about
Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd the
realm,

And leagued him with the heathen, while the
King

Was waging war on Lancelot: then she
thought,

"With what a hate the people and the King
Must hate me," and bow'd down upon her
hands

Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd
No silence, brake it, uttering "Late! so
late!"

What hour, I wonder, now?" and when she
drew

No answer, by and by began to hum
An air the nuns had taught her; "Late, so
late!"

Which when she heard, the Queen look'd
up, and said,

"O maiden, if indeed you list to sing,
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may weep."
Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night
and chill!"

Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light had we: for that we do repent;
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light: so late! and dark and chill the
night!"

O let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"Have we not heard the bridegroom is so
sweet?"

O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now."

So sang the novice, while full passionately,
Her head upon her hands, remembering
Her thought when first she came, wept the
sad Queen.

Then said the little novice prattling to her:

"O pray you, noble lady, weep no more;
But let my words, the words of one so small,
Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,
And if I do not there is penance given—
Comfort your sorrows; for they do not flow
From evil done; right sure am I of that,
Who see your tender grace and stateliness.

But weigh your sorrows with our lord the
King's,

And weighing find them less; for gone is he
To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot there,
Round that strong castle where he holds the
Queen;

And Modred whom he left in charge of all,
The traitor—Ah sweet lady, the King's grief
For his own self, and his own Queen, and
realm,

Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours.

For me, I thank the saints I am not great.
For if there ever come a grief to me

I: y my cry in silence, and have done:
None knows it, and my tears have brought
me good.

But even were the griefs of little ones
As great as those of great ones, yet this grief
Is added to the griefs the great must bear,
That howsoever much they may desire
Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud:
As even here they talk at Almesbury
About the good King and his wicked Queen,
And were I such a King with such a Queen,
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,
But were I such a King, it could not be."

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the
Queen,

"Will the child kill me with her innocent
talk?"

But openly she answer'd, "Must not I,
If this false traitor have displaced his lord,
Grieve with the common grief of all the
realm?"

"Yea," said the maid, "this is all woman's
grief,

That she is woman, whose disloyal life
Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round
Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,
With signs and miracles and wonders, then,
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen."

and dark and chill the
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ng of the Queen."

Then thought the Queen within herself
again,
"Will the child kill me with her foolish
prate?"

But openly she spake and said to her,
"O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables
Round,
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs
And simple miracles of thy nunnery?"

To whom the little novice garrulously :
"Yea, but I know : the land was full of signs
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.
So said my father, and himself was knight
Of the great Table—at the founding of it :
And rode thereto from Lyonesse, and he
said

That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard
Strange music, and he paused and turning—
there,

All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
And with a wild sea light about his feet,
He saw them—headland after headland
flame

Far on into the rich heart of the west :
And in the light the white mermaid swam,
And strong man-breasted things stood from
the sea.

And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land,
To which the little elves of chasm and cleft
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.
So said my father—yea, and furthermore,
Next morning, while he past the dim-lit
woods,

Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy
Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,
That shook beneath them, as the thistle
shakes

When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed :
And still at evenings on before his horse
The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke
Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and
broke

Flying, for all the land was full of life.
And when at last he came to Camelot,
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall ;
And in the hall itself was such a feast
As never man had dream'd ; for every knight
Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served
By hands unseen ; and even as he said
Down in the cellars merry bloated things
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts
While the wine ran : so glad were spirits and
men

Before the coming of the sinful Queen."

Then spake the Queen, and somewhat
bitterly,
"Were they so glad? ill prophets were they
all,

Spirits and men : could none of them foresee,
Not even thy wise father with his signs
And wonders what has fall'n upon the
realm?"

To whom the novice garrulously again :
"Yea, one, a bard ; of whom my father said,
Full many a noble war-song had he sung,
Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's fleet,
Between the steep cliff and the coming wave ;
And many a mystic lay of life and death
Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops,
When round him bent the spirits of the hills
With all their dewy hair blown back like
flame :

So said my father—and that night the bard
Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the
King

As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd at
those

Who call'd him the false son of Gorlois :
For there was no man knew from whence he
came ;

But after tempest, when the long wave broke
All down the thundering shores of Bude and
Bos,

There came a day as still as heaven, and then
They found a naked child upon the sands
Of dark Dundagil by the Cornish sea ;
And that was Arthur ; and they foster'd him
Till he by miracle was approved king :
And that his grave should be a mystery
From all men, like his birth ; and could he find
A woman in her womanhood as great
As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,
The twain together well might change the
world.

But even in the middle of his song
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,
And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would
have fall'n,
But that they stay'd him up ; nor would he
tell

His vision ; but what doubt that he foresaw
This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen?"

Then thought the Queen, "Lo ! they have
set her on,
Our simple-seeming Abbess and her nuns,
To play upon me," and bow'd her head nor
spake.

Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd
hands,
Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,
Said the good nuns would check her gadding
tongue

Full often, "And, sweet lady, if I seem
To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,
Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales
Which my good father told me, check me
too :

Nor let me shame my father's memory, one
Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say
Sir Lancelot had the noblest ; and he died,
Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers
back,

And left me ; but of others who remain,
And of the two first-famed for courtesy—
And pray you check me if I ask amiss—
But pray you, which had noblest, while you
moved

Among them, Lancelot or our lord the
King?"

Then the pale Queen look'd up and answer'd her,
 "Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,
 Was gracious to all ladies, and the same
 In open battle or the tilting-field
 Forbore his own advantage, and these two
 Were the most nobly-manner'd men of all;
 For manners are not idle, but the fruit
 Of loyal nature, and of noble mind."

"Yea," said the maid, "be manners such
 fair fruit?
 Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-
 fold
 Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,
 The most disloyal friend in all the world."

To which a mournful answer made the
 Queen,
 "O closed about by narrowing nunnery-walls,
 What knowest thou of the world, and all its
 lights
 And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe?
 If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,
 Were for one hour less noble than himself,
 Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire,
 And weep for her, who drew him to his
 doom."

"Yea," said the little novice, "I pray for
 both;
 But I should all as soon believe that his,
 Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,
 As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be
 Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen."

So she, like many another babbler, hurt
 Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where
 she would heal:
 For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat
 Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who
 cried,

"Such as thou art be never maiden more
 Forever! thou their tool, set on to plague
 And play upon, and harry me, petty spy
 And traitress." When that storm of anger
 brake

From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,
 White as her veil, and stood before the
 Queen

As tremulously as foam upon the beach
 Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,
 And when the Queen had added "Get thee
 hence!"

Fled frighted. Then that other left alone
 Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,
 Saying in herself, "The simple, fearful child
 Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt
 Smarter than any child, betrays itself.
 But help me, heaven, for surely I repent.
 For what is true repentance but in thought—
 Not e'en in inmost thought to think again
 The sins that made the past so pleasant to
 us:

And I have sworn never to see him more,
 To see him more."

And e'en in saying this,
 Her memory from old habit of the mind

Went slipping back upon the golden days
 In which she saw him first, when Lancelot
 came,

Reputed the best knight and goodliest man,
 Ambassador, to lead her to his lord
 Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead
 Of his and her retinue moving, they,
 Rapt in sweet thought, or lively, all on love
 And sport and tilts and pleasure, (for the
 time

Was maytime, and as yet no sin was
 dream'd.)

Rode under groves that look'd like a paradise
 Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth
 That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro'
 the earth,

And on from hill to hill, and every day
 Beheld at noon in some delicious dale
 The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised
 For brief repast or afternoon repose
 By couriers gone before; and on again,
 Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw
 The Dragon of the great Pendragon-ship,
 That crown'd the state pavilion of the King,
 Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immersed in such a
 trance,
 And moving thro' the past unconsciously,
 Came to that point, when first she saw the
 King

Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to find
 Her journey done, glanced at him, thought
 him cold,

High, self-contained, and passionless, not
 like him,

"Not like my Lancelot!"—while she brood-
 ed thus

And grew half-guilty in her thoughts again,
 There rode an armed warrior to the doors.
 A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery ran,
 Then on a sudden a cry, "The King!" She
 sat

Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armed
 feet

Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors
 Rang coming, prone from off her seat she
 fell,

And grovelling with her face against the floor:
 There with her milkwhite arms and shadowy
 hair

She made her face a darkness from the King:
 And in the darkness heard his armed feet
 Pause by her; then came silence, then a
 voice,

Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's
 Denouncing judgment, but tho' changed the
 King's.

"Liest thou here so low, the child of one
 I honor'd, happy, dead before thy shame?
 Well is it that no child is born of thee.
 The children born of thee are sword and fire,
 Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,
 The craft of kindred and the Godless hosts
 Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern Sea.
 Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right
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Lancelot, my right

The mightiest of my knights abode with me,
Have everywhere about this land of Christ
In twelve great battles ruining overthrown.
And knowest thou now from whence I come

— from him,
From waging bitter war with him : and he,
That did not shun to smite me in worse way,
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,
He spared to lift his hand against the King
Who made him knight : but man, a knight
was slain ;

And many more, and all his kith and kin
Clave to him, and abode in his own land.
And many more when Modred raised revolt,
Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave
To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.
And of this remnant will I leave a part,
True mer : who love me still, for whom I live,
To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,
Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.
Fear not : thou shalt be guarded till my
death.

Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies
Have err'd not, that I march to meet my
doom.

Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,
That I the King should greatly care to live ;
For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.
Bear with me for the last time while I show,
E'en for thy sake, the sin which thou has
sinn'd.

For when the Roman left us, and their law
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways
Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a deed
Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong.
But I was 't of all the kings who drew
The knight-hood-errant of this realm and all
The realms together under me, their Head,
In that fair order of my Table Round,
A glorious company, the flower of men,
To serve as model for the mighty world,
And be the fair beginning of a time.
I made them lay their hands in mine and
swear

To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as
their King.

To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds,
Until they won her ; for indeed I knew
Of no more subtle master under heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought, and amiable words
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.
And all this I gave until I wedded thee !
Believing "to mine helpmate, one to feel
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy."
Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot ;
Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt ;
Then others, following these my mightiest
knights,
And drawing foul ensample from fair names,

Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite
Of all my heart had destined did obtain,
And all thro' thee ! so that this life of mine
I guard as God's high gift from scathe and
wrong.

Not greatly care to lose ; but rather think
How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,
To sit once more within his lonely hall,
And miss the wonted number of my knights,
And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds
As in the golden days before thy sin.
For which of us, who might be left, could
speak

Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at thee?
And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk
Thy shadow still would glide from room to
room,

And I should evermore be vext with thee
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,
Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.
For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love thy
lord,

Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.
I am not made of so slight elements.
Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.
I hold that man the worst of public foes
Who either for his own or children's sake,
To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife
Whom he knows false, abide and rule the
house :

For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
Her station, taken everywhere for pure,
She like a new disease, unknown to men,
Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,
Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and
saps

The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse
With devil's leaps, and poisons half the
young.

Worst of the worst were that man he that
reigns !
Better the King's waste hearth and aching
heart

Than thou reseat in thy place of light,
The mockery of my people, and their bane."

He paused, and in the pause she crept an
inch
Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
Then waiting by the doors the war-horse
neigh'd
As at a friend's voice, and he spake again :

"Yet think not that I come to urge thy
crimes,
I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
The wrath which forced my thoughts on that
fierce law,

The doom of treason and the flaming death,
(When first I learnt thee hidden here) is past.
The pang — which while I weigh'd thy heart
with one

Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,
Made my tears burn — is also past, in part;

And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,
Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives: do thou for thine own soul the rest.
But how to take last leave of all I loved?
O golden hair, with which I used to play
Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,
And beauty such as never woman wore,
Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee—
I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,
But Lancelot's: nay, they never were the
King's.

I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh,
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and mine
own flesh,

Here looking down on thine polluted, cries
'I loathe thee': yet not less, O Guinevere,
For I was ever virgin save for thee,
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life
So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
Hereafter in that world where all are pure
We two may meet before high God, and thou
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and
know

I am thine husband— not a smaller soul,
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I
hence.

Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet
blow:

They summon me their King to lead mine
hosts

Far down to that great battle in the west,
Where I must strike against my sister's son,
Leagued with the lords of the White Horse
and knights

Once mine, and strike him dead, and meet
myself

Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.
And thou remaining here wilt learn the
event;

But hither shall I never come again,
Never lie by thy side, see thee no more,
Farewell!

And while she grovelling'd at his feet,
She felt the King's breath wander o'er her
neck,

And, in the darkness o'er her fallen head,
Perceived the waving of his hands that blest.

Then, listening till those armed steps were
gone,
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish
found

The casement: "Peradventure," so she
thought,

"If I might see his face, and not be seen."
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door!
And near him the sad nuns with each a light
stood, and he gave them charge about the
Queen,

To guard and foster her forevermore.
And while he spake to these his helm was
lower'd,

To which for crest the golden dragon clung
Of Britain; so she did not see his face,

Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,
Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship
Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire.
And even then he turn'd; and more and more
The moony vapor rolling round the King,
Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant in it,
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray
And grayer, till himself became as mist
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and cried
aloud,
"O Arthur!" there her voice brake sud-
denly,

Then—as a stream that spouting from a cliff
Falls in mid-air, but gathering at the base
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the vale—
Went on in passionate utterance.

"Gone—my lord!
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain!
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.
Farewell? I should have answer'd his fare-
well.

His mercy choked me. Gons, my lord the
King,
My own true lord! how dare I call him
mine?

The shadow of another cleaves to me,
And makes me one pollution: he, the King,
Call'd me polluted: shall I kill myself?
What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,
If soul be soul; nor can I kill my shame;
No, nor by living can I live it down.

The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to
months,

The months will add themselves and make
the years,

The years will roll into the centuries,
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.

I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.
Let the world be; that is but of the world.

What else? what hope? I think there was a
hope,

Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope;
His hope he call'd it; but he never mocks,

For mockery is the fume of little hearts.
And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven

My wickedness to him, and left me hope
That in mine own heart I can live down sin

And be his mate hereafter in the heavens
Before high God. Ah great and gentle lord,

Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint
Among his warring senses, to thy knights—

To whom my false voluptuous pride, that
took

Full easily all impressions from below,
Would not look up, or half-despised the
height

To which I would not or I could not climb—
I thought I could not breathe in that fine air

That pure severity of perfect light—
I wanted warmth and color which I found

In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou art,
Thou art the highest and most human too,

Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none
Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?

Now—ere he goes to the great Battle? none;

an angel's, but she saw,
and smitten by the lights,
great Pendragonship
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Myself must tell him in that purer life,
But now it were too daring. Ah my God,
What might I not have made of thy fair
world,
Had I but loved thy highest creature here?
It was my duty to have loved the highest:
It surely was my profit had I known:
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
We needs must love the highest when we
see it,
Not Lancelot, nor another."

Here her hand
Grasp'd, made her veil her eyes: she look'd
and saw
The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to
her,
"Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven?"
Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns
All round her, weeping; and her heart was
loosed

Within her, and she wept with these and said:
"Ye know me then, that wicked one, who
broke
The vast design and purpose of the King.
O shut me round with narrowing nunnery-
walls,
Meek maidens, from the voices crying
'Shame.'

I must not scorn myself: he loves me still.
Let no one dream but that he loves me still.
So let me, if you do not shudder at me
Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you:

Wear black and white, and be a nun like you;
Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your
feasts;
Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your
joys,
But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;
Pray and be prayed for; lie before your
shrines;
Do each low office of your holy house;
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dole
To poor sick people, richer in his eyes
Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I;
And treat their loathsome hurts and heal
mine own;
And so wear out in almsdeed and in prayer
The sombre close of that voluptuous day,
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King."

She said: they took her to themselves; and
she
Still hoping, fearing "Is it yet too late?"
Dwelt with them, till in time their Abbess
died.
Then she, for her good deeds and her pure
life,
And for the power of ministration in her,
And likewise for the high rank she had
borne,
Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess lived
For three brief years, and there, an Abbess,
past
To where beyond these voices there is peace.

ENOCH ARDEN.

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left a
chasm;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster; then a moulder'd church; and
higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
And high in heaven behind it a gray down
With Danish barrows; and a hazel-wood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray, the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats up-drawn;
And built their castles of dissolving sand
To watch them overflow'd, or following up
And flying the white breaker, daily left
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff:
In this the children play'd at keeping house.
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next.
While Annie still was mistress; but at times
Enoch would hold possession for a week.
"This is my house and this my little wife."
"Mine too," said Philip, "turn and turn
about":
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-
made
Was master: then would Philip, his blue
eyes
All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,
Shriek out, "I hate you, Enoch," and at
this
The little wife would weep for company.
And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,
And the new warmth of life's ascending sun
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,
But Philip loved in silence; and the girl
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;

But she loved Enoch ; tho' she knew it not,
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set
A purpose evermore before his eyes,
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
To purchase his own boat, and make a home
For Annie : and so prosper'd that at last
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a year
On board a merchantman, and made himself
Full sailor ; and he thrice had pluck'd a life
From the dread sweep of the down-stream-
ing seas :
And all men look'd upon him favorably :
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth
May,
He purchased his own boat, and made a
home
For Annie, neat and nestlike, half-way up
The narrow street that clamber'd toward the
mill.

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,
The younger people making holiday,
With bag and sack and basket, great and
small,
Went nutting to the hazels, Philip stay'd
(His father lying sick and needing him)
An hour behind ; but as he climb'd the hill,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,
His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
That burned as on an altar. Philip look'd,
And in their eyes and faces read his doom ;
Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd
And slipt aside, and like a wounded life
Crept down into the hollows of the wood ;
There, while the rest were loud with merry-
making,
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the
bells,
And merrily ran the years, seven happy
years,
Seven happy years of health and compe-
tence,
And mutual love and honorable toil ;
With children ; first a daughter. In him
woke,
With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish
To save all earnings to the uttermost,
And give his child a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or hers ; a wish renew'd,
When two years after came a boy to be
The rosy idol of her solitudes,
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,
Or often journeying landward ; for in truth
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-
spoil
In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
Rough-reden'd with a thousand winter-
gales,
Not only to the market-croas were known,

But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,
And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.

Then came a change, as all things human
change.

Ten miles to northward of the narrow port
Open'd a larger haven : thither used
Enoch at times to go by land or sea ;
And once when there, and clambering on a
mast

In harbor, by mischance he slipt and fell :
A limb was broken when they lifted him ;
And while he lay recovering there, his wife
Bore him another son, a sickly one :
Another hand crept too across his trade
Taking her bread and theirs : and on him
fell,

Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,
To see his children leading evermore
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
And hor, he loved, a beggar : then he pray'd
" Save them from this, whatever comes to
me."

And while he pray'd, the master of that ship
Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,
Came, for he knew the man and valued
him,

Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go ?
There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have
the place ?

And Enoch all at once assented to it,
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd
No graver than as when some little cloud
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,
And isles a light in the offing : yet the wife —
When he was gone — the children — what to
do ?

Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his
plans ;
To sell the boat — and yet he loved her
well —

How many a rough sea had he weather'd in
her !

He knew her, as a horseman knows his
horse —

And yet to sell her — then with what she
brought

Buy goods and stores — set Annie forth in
trade

With all that seamen needed or their wives —
So might she keep the house while he was
gone.

Should he not trade himself out yonder ? go
This voyage more than once ? yea twice or
thrice —

As oft as needed — last, returning rich,
Become the master of a larger craft,
With fuller profits lead an easier life,
Have all his pretty young ones educated,
And pass his days in peace among his own.

behind the down,
ding lion-whelp,
of the lonely Hall,
as Enoch's ministering.

e, as all things human
rd of the narrow port
: thither used
by land or sea ;
and clambering on a

nce he slept and fell :
they lifted him ;
vering there, his wife
a sickly one :
o across his trade
d theirs : and on him

id God-fearing man,
e, doubt and gloom.
nightmare of the night,
ading evermore
f hand-to-mouth,
eggar : then he pray'd
s, whatever comes to

the master of that ship
hearing his mischance,
the man and valued

l China-bound,
swain. Would he go ?
weeks before she sail'd,
Would Enoch have

assented to it,
er to his prayer.

of mischance appear'd
on some little cloud
ay of the sun,
offing : yet the wife—
he children—what to

g-pondering on his
d yet he loved her

had he weather'd in

orseman knows his

then with what she

—set Annie forth in

eded or their wives—
house while he was

self out yonder? go
once? yea twice or

returning rich,
larger craft,
an easier life,
ing ones educated,
ace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all :
Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,
Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.
Forward she started with a happy cry,
And laid the feeble infant in his arms ;
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his
limbs,
Appraised his weight, and fondled fatherlike,
But had no heart to break his purposes
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had
girt
Her finger, Annie fought against his will :
Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd
(Sure that all evil would come out of it)
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in vain ;
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'

For Enoch parted with his old sea-stead,
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his
hand

To fit their little streetward sitting-room
With shelf and corner for the goods and stores.
So all day long till Enoch's last at home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and axe,
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to hear
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd and
rang.

Till this was ended, and his careful hand, —
The space was narrow, — having order'd all
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs
Her blossom or her seedling, paused ; and he,
Who needs would work for Annie to the last,
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of farewell
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,
Save as his Annie's, were a laughter to him.
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes
Whatever came to him : and then he said,
" Annie, this voyage by the grace of God
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,
For I 'll be back, my girl, before you know
it."

Then lightly rocking baby's cradle, "and he,
This pretty, puny, weakly little one, —
Nay — for I love him all the better for it —
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,
And make him merry when I come home
again.

Come Annie, come, cheer up before I go."

Him running on thus hopefully she heard,
And almost hoped herself ; but when he turn'd
The current of his talk to graver things
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing
On providence and trust in Heaven, she
heard,

Heard and not heard him ; as the village
girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
Musing on him that used to fill it for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke, "O Enoch, you are
wise ;
And yet for all your wisdom well know I
That I shall look upon your face no more."

"Well then," said Enoch, "I shall look
on yours.
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here
(He named the day) : get you a seaman's
glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears."

But when the last of those last moments
came,
"Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,
Look to the babes, and till I come again,
Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.
And fear no more for me ; or if you fear
Cast all your cares on God ; that anchor holds.
Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,
The sea is His : He made it."

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones ;
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept
After a night of feverous wakefulness,
When Annie would have raised him Enoch
said,

"Wake him not ; let him sleep ; how should
the child
Remember this?" and kiss'd him in his cot,
But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt
A tiny curl, and gave it : this he kept
Thro' all his future ; but now hastily caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his
way.

She when the day, that Enoch mention'd,
came,
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain : perhaps
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye ;
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous ;
She saw him not : and while he stood on deck
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail
She watch'd it, and departed weeping for
him ;
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his
grave,
Set her sad will no less to chime with his,
But throve not in her trade, not being bred
To barter, nor compensating the want
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,
And still foreboding "What would Enoch
say?"

For more than once, in days of difficulty
And pressure, had she sold her wares for less

Then what she gave in buying what she sold :
She fail'd and sudden'd knowing it; and thus,
Expectant of that news which never came,
Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly born and
grew
Yet sicker, tho' the mother cared for it
With all a mother's care : nevertheless,
Whether her business often call'd her from it,
Or thro' the want of what it needed most,
Or means to pay the voice who best could tell
What most it needed — howso'er it was,
After a lingering, — ere she was aware, —
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried it,
Philip's true heart, which hung 'd for her
peace

(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon
her),

Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.
"Surely," said Philip, "I may see her now,
May be some little comfort"; therefore went,
Past thro' the solitary room in front,
Paused for a moment at an inner door,
Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,
Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her grief,
Fresh from the burial of her little one,
Cared not to look on any human face,
But turn'd her own toward the wall and
wept.

Then Philip standing up said falteringly,
"Annie, I came to ask a favor of you."

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd re-
ply,

"Favor from one so sad and so forlorn
As I am!" half abash'd him; yet unask'd,
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
He sets himself beside her, saying to her :

"I came to speak to you of what he
wish'd,

Enoch, your husband : I have ever said
You chose the best among us — a strong
man :

For where he fixt his heart he set his hand
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.
And wherefore did he go this weary way,
And leave you lonely? not to see the world —
For pleasure? — nay, but for the where-
withal

To give his babes a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or yours : that was his
wish.

And if he come again, next will he be
To find the precious morning hours were lost.
And it would vex him even in his grave,
If he could know his babes were running
wild

Like colts about the waste. So, Annie,
now —

Have we not known each other all our lives?
I do beseech you by the love you bear
Him and his children not to say me nay —

For, if you will, when Enoch comes again
Why then he shall repay me — if you will,
Annie — for I am rich and well-to-do.
Now let me put the boy and girl to school :
This is the favor that I came to ask."

Then Annie with her brows against the
wall
Answer'd, "I cannot look you in the face ;
I seem so foolish and so broken down ;
When you came in my sorrow broke me
down ;
And now I think your kindness breaks me
down ;
But Enoch lives ; that is borne in on me ;
He will repay you : money can be repaid ;
Not kindness such as yours."

And Philip ask'd

"Then you will let me, Annie?"

There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon
him,
And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,
Then calling down a blessing on his head
Caught at his hand and wrung it passion-
ately,
And past into the little garth beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,
And bought them needful books, and every
way,
Like one who does his duty by his own,
Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's
sake,

Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,
The late and early roses from his wall,
Or conies from the down, and now and then,
With some pretext of fineness in the meal
To save the offence of charitable, flour
From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind :
Scarce could the woman when he came upon
her,

Out of full heart and boundless gratitude
Light on a broken word to thank him with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-all ;
From distant corners of the street they ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily ;
Lords of his house and of his mill were they ;
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with
him

And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd
As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going ye know not where ; and so ten years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

Enoch comes again
to me—if you will,
and well-to-do.
and girl to school;
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s of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children
long'd

To go with others, nutting to the wood,
And Annie would go with them; then they
begg'd

For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too:
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and say-
ing to him,

"Come with us Father Philip," he denied;
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their wish,
For was not Annie with them? and they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,
Just where 'he prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, all her force
Fail'd her; and sighing "Let me rest" she
said:

So Philip rested with her well-content;
While all the younger ones with jubilant
cries

Broke from their elders, and tumultuously
Down thro' the whitening hazels made a
plunge

To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or
broke

The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour
Here in this wood, when like a wounded life
He crept into the shadow: at last he said
Lifting his honest forehead, "Listen, Annie,
How merry they are down yonder in the
wood."

"Tired, Annie?" for she did not speak a
word.

"Tired?" but her face had fall'n upon her
hands;

At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
"The ship was lost," he said, "the ship was
lost!

No more of that! why should you kill yourself
And make them orphans quite?" And Annie
said,

"I thought not of it: but—I know not why—
Their voices make me feel so solitary."

Then Philip comes somewhat closer spoke.
"Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,
And it has been upon my mind so long,
That tho' I know not when it first came there,
I know that it will out at last. O Annie,
It is beyond all hope, against all chance,
That he who left you ten long years ago
Should still be living; well then—let me
speak:

I grieve to see you poor and wanting help:
I cannot help you as I wish to do
Unless—they say that women are so quick—
Perhaps you know what I would have you
know—

I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
A father to your children: I do think
They love me as a father: I am sure

That I love them as if they were mine own;
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
That after all these sad uncertain years,
We might be still as happy as God grants
To any of His creatures. Think upon it:
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,
No burthen, save my care for you and yours;
And we have known each other all our lives,
And I have loved you longer than you know."

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she spoke:
"You have been as God's good angel in our
house.

God bless you for it, God reward you for it,
Philip, with something happier than myself.
Can one love twice? can you be ever loved
As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?"

"I am content," he answer'd, "to be loved
A little after Enoch." "O, she cried,
Scared as it were, "dear Philip, wait a while:
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long:

Surely I shall be wiser in a year:
O wait a little!" Philip sadly said,
"Annie, as I have waited all my life
I will wait a little." "Nay," she cried,
"I am bound: you have my promise—in a
year:

Will you not bide your year as I bide mine?"
And Philip answer'd, "I will bide my year."

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day
Pass from the Danish barrow overhead:
Then fearing night and chill for Annie rose,
And sent his voice beneath him thro' the
wood.

Up came the children laden with their spoil;
Then all descended to the port, and there
At Annie's door he paused and gave his
hand,

Saying gently, "Annie, when I spoke to you,
That was your hour of weakness. I was
wrong.

I am always bound to you, but you are free."
Then Annie weeping answer'd, "I am
bound."

She spoke; and in one moment as it were,
While yet she went about her household ways,
Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,
That he had loved her longer than she knew,
That autumn into autumn flash'd again,
And there he stood once more before her face,
Claiming her promise. "Is it a year?" she
ask'd.

"Yes, if the nuts," he said, "be ripe again:
Come out and see." But she—she put
him off—

So much to look to—such a change—a
month—
Give her a month—she knew that she was
bound—

A month—no more. Then Philip with his
eyes

Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice
Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,
"Take your own time, Annie, take your own
time."

And Annie could have wept for pity of him ;
And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable excuse,
Trying his truth and his long sufferance,
Till half-another year had slipped away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but trifle with
her ;

Some that she but held off to draw him on ;
And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,
As simple folk that knew not their own
minds ;

And one, in whom all evil fancies clung
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly
Would hint at worse in either. Her own son
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish ;
But 'ermore the daughter prest upon her
To wed the man so dear to all of them
And lift the household out of poverty ;
And Philip's rosy face contracting grew
Careworn and wan ; and all these things fell
on her

Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly
Pray'd for a sign "my Enoch, is he gone ?"
Then compass'd round by the blind wall of
night

Brook'd not the expectant terror of her heart,
Started from bed, and struck between a light,
Then desperately seized the holy Book,
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
Suddenly put her finger on the text,
"Under a palmtree." That was nothing to
her :

No meaning there : she closed the book and
slept :

When lo ! her Enoch sitting on a height,
Under a palmtree, over him the Sun :
"He is gone," she thought, "he is happy,
he is singing

Hosanna in the highest : yonder shines
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be
palms

Whereof the happy people strowing cried
'Hosanna in the highest !' " Here she woke,
Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him,
"There is no reason why we should not wed."
"Then for God's sake," he answer'd, "both
our sakes,

So you will wed me, let it be at once."

So these were wed and merrily rang the
bells,

Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,
She knew not whence ; a whisper on her ear,
She knew not what ; nor loved she to be left
Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.
What aild her then, that ere she enter'd,
often

Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,
Fearing to enter : Philip thought he knew :

Such doubts and fears were common to her
state,
Being with child : but when her child was
born,

Then her new child was as herself renew'd,
Then the new mother came about her heart,
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch ? Prosperously
sail'd

Th' ship "Good Fortune," tho' at setting
forth

The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward, shook
And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvext
She slept across the summer of the world,
Then after a long tumble about the Cape
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,
She passing thro' the summer world again,
The breath of Heaven came continually
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and bought
Quaint monsters for the market of those
times,

A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage : at first in-
deed

Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her
bows ;

Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable,
Then baffling, a long course of them ; and
last

Storm, such as drove her under moonless
heavens

Till hard upon the cry of "breakers" came
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
But Enoch and two others. Half the night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken spars,
These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance,
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing
roots ;

Nor save for pity was it hard to take
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of palm,
a hut,

Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than
boy,

Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and wreck,
Lay lingering out a three-years' death-in-life.
They could not leave him. After he was
gone,

The two remaining found a fallen stem ;
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell

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Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.
In those two deaths he read God's warning
"wait."

The mountain wooded to the peak, the
lawn
And winding glades high up like ways to
Heaven,

The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
The lustre of the long convolvuluses
That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
And glories of the broad belt of the world,
All these he saw; but what he fain had seen
He could not see, the kindly human face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the
reef,

The moving whisper of huge trees that
branch'd

And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail:
No sail from day to day, but every day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices;
The blaze upon the waters to the east;
The blaze upon his island overhead -
The blaze upon the waters to the west;
Then the great stars that globed themselves
in Heaven,

The hollow-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise — but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to
watch,
So still, the golden lizard on him paused,
A phantom made of many phantoms moved
Before him haunting him, or he himself
Moved haunting people, things and places,
known

Far in a darker isle beyond the line;
The babes, their babble, Annie, the small
house,
The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,
The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the
chill

November dawns and dewy-glooming dawns,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-color'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily — far and far away —
He heard the pealing of his parish bells;
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started
up
Shuddering, and when the beautiful hateful
isle

Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart
Spoken with That, which being everywhere
Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all
alone,

Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head
The sunny and rainy seasons came and went
Year after year. His hopes to see his own,
And pace the sacred old familiar fields,
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another ship
(She wanted water) blown by baffling winds
Like the Good Fortune, from her destined
course,
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she
lay;

For since the mate had seen at early dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle
The silent water slipping from the hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst away
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the
shores
With clamor. Downward from his mountain
gorge

Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded solitary,
Brown, looking hardly human, strangely clad,
Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it seem'd,
With inarticulate rage, and making signs
They knew not what: and yet he led the way
To where the rivulets of sweet water ran;
And ever as he mingled with the crew,
And heard them talking, his long-bounden
tongue

Was loosen'd, till he made them understand;
Whom, when their casks were fill'd they took
aboard:

And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,
Scarce credited at first but more and more,
Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it:
And clothes they gave him and free passage
home:

But oft he work'd among the rest and shook
His isolation from him. None of these
Came from his county, or could answer him,
If question'd, aught of what he cared to
know.

And dull the voyage was with long delays,
The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but evermore
His fancy fled before the lazy wind
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon
He like a lover down thro' all his blood
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-breath
Of England, blown across her ghostly wall:
And that same morning officers and men
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it:
Then moving up the coast they landed him,
Ev'n in that harbor whence he sail'd before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,
But homeward, — home, — what home? had
he a home?

His home he walk'd. Bright was that after-
noon,
Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either
chasm,
Where either haven open'd on the deeps,
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in
gray:

Cut off the length of highway on before,
And left but narrow breadth to left and right
Of water'dholt or tilth or pasturage.
On the nigh-naked tree the Robin piped

Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it
down :

Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom ;
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light
Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly
stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the
home

Where Annie lived and loved him, and his
babe

In those far-off seven happy years were born ;
But finding neither light nor murmur there
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept
Still downward thinking "dead or dead to
me !"

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he
went,
Seeking a tavern with old he knew,
A front of timber of antiquity,
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old.
He thought it must have gone ; but he was
gone

Who kept it : and his widow, Miriam Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held the house ;
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now
Still with yet a bed for wandering men.
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the port,
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so
bow'd,

So broken—all the story of his house.
His baby's death, her growing poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to school,
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the
birth

Of Philip's child : and o'er his countenance
No shadow past, nor motion ; any one,
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale
Less than the teller : only when she closed,
"Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost,"
He shaking his gray head pathetically,
Repeated muttering "Cast away and lost" ;
Again in deeper inward whispers "Lost !"

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again ;
"If I might look on her sweet face again
And know that she is happy." So the
thought
Haunted and harass'd him, and drove him
forth

At evening when the dull November day
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.
There he sat down gazing on all below ;
There did a thousand memories roll upon
him,

Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
The ruddy square of comfortable light,
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures

The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the street,
The latest house to landward ; but behind,
With one small gate that open'd on the waste,
Flourish'd a little garden square and wall'd :
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk
Of shingle, and a walk divided it :
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and
stole

Up by the wall, behind the yew ; and thence
That which he better might have shunn'd, if
griefs

Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd board
Sparkled and shone ; so genial was the
hearth :

And on the right hand of the hearth he saw
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees ;
And o'er her second father stooped a girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee.
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
To tempt the babe, woe rear'd his creasy
arms,

Caught at and evermiss'd it, and they laugh'd :
And on the left hand of the hearth he saw
The mother glancing often toward her babe,
But turning now and then to speak with him,
Her son, who stood before her tall and strong,
And saying that which pleased him, for he
smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life be-
held

His wife his wife no more, and saw the babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the happi-
ness,

And his own children tall and beautiful,
And him, that other, reigning in his place,
I ord of his rights and of his children's love, —
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him all,
Because things seen are mightier than things
heard,

Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch,
and fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,
Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot,
And feeling all along the garden-wall,
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be
found,
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that
his knees
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

He madly strikes
at his weary life.

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upon the waste.

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prone he dug
h, and pray'd.

"Too hard to bear! why did they take me
thence?"

O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
A little longer! aid me, give me strength
Not to tell her, never to let her know.
Help me not to break in upon her peace.
My children too! must I not speak to these?
They know me not. I should betray myself.
Never: no father's kiss for me, — the girl
So like her mother, and the boy, my son."

There speech and thought and nature fail'd
a little,
And he lay tranced: but when he rose and
paced

Back toward his solitary home again,
All down the narrow street he went
Beating it in upon his weary brain,
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
"Not to tell her, never to let her know."

He was not all unhappy. His resolve
Uppore him, and firm faith, and evermore
Prayer from a living source within the will,
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,
Kept him a living soul. "This miller's wife,"
He said to Miriam, "that you told me of,
Has she no fear that her first husband lives?"
"Ay, ay, poor soul," said Miriam, "fear
snow!"

If you could tell her you had seen him dead,
Why, that would be her comfort": and he
thought,

"After the Lord has call'd me she shall know,
I wait His time," and Enoch set himself,
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.
Almost to all things could he turn his hand.
Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or help'd
At lading and unlading the tall barks,
That brought the stunted commerce of those
days:

Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself:
Yet since he did but labor for himself,
Work without hope, there was not life in it
Whereby the man could live; and as the year
Roll'd itself round again to meet the day
When Enoch had return'd, a languor came
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
Weakening the man, till he could do no more,
But kept the house, his chair, and last his
bed.

And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.
For sure no gladder does the stranded wreck
See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall
The boat that bears the hope of life approach
To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kindlier
hope
On Enoch thinking, "After I am gone,
Then may she learn I loved her to the last."
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said,

"Woman, I have a secret — only swear,
Before I tell you — swear upon the book
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead."
"Dead," clamor'd the good woman, "hear
him talk!"

I warrant, man, that we shall bring you
round."

"Swear," added Enoch solemnly, "on the
book."

And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.
Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her,
"Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?"
"Know him?" she said, "I knew him far
away."

Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;
Held his head high, and cared for no man,
he."

Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her;
"His head is low, and no man cares for him.
I think I have not three days more to live;
I am the man." At which the woman gave
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.

"You Arden, you! nay, — sure he was a foot
Higher than you be," Enoch said again,
"My God has bow'd me down to what I am;
My grief and solitude have broken me;
Nevertheless, know you that I am he
Who married — but that name has twice been
changed —

I married her who married Philip Ray.
Sit, listen." Then he told her of his voyage,
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,
And how he kept it. As the woman heard,
Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,
While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly
To rush abroad all round the little haven,
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;
But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,
Saying only, "See your bairns before you go!
Eh, let me fetch 'm, Arden," and arose
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung
A moment on her words, but then replied:

"Woman, disturb me not now at the last,
But let me hold my purpose till I die.
Sit down again; mark me and understand,
While I have power to speak. I charge you
now,

When you shall see her, tell her that I died
Blessing her, praying for her, loving her;
Save for the bar between us, loving her
As when she laid her head beside my own.
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw
So like her mother, that my latest breath
Was spent in blessing her and praying for
her.

And tell my son that I died blessing him.
And say to Philip that I blest him too;
He never meant us anything but good.
But if my children care to see me dead,
Who hardly knew me living, let them come,
I am their father; but she must not come,
For my dead face would vex her after-life.
And now there is but one of all my blood,
Who will embrace me in the world-to-be:
This hair is his: she cut it off and gave it,
And I have borne it with me all these years.

And thought to bear it with me to my grave ;
But now my mind is changed, for I shall see
him,
My babe in bliss ; wherefore when I am gone,
Take, give her this, for it may comfort her ;
It will moreover be a token to her,
That I am he."

He ceased ; and Miriam Lane
Made such a voluble answer promising all,
That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her
Repeating all he wish'd, and once again
She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,
There came so loud a calling of the sea,
That all the houses in the haven rang.
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad
Crying with a loud voice " A sail ! a sail !
I am saved " ; and so fell back and spoke no
more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

ADDITIONAL POEMS.

AYLMER'S FIELD.

1793.

Dust are our frames ; and, gilded dust,
our pride
Looks only for a moment whole and sound ;
Like that long-buried body of the king,
Found lying with his urns and ornaments,
Which at a touch of light, an air of heaven,
Slit into ashes and was found no more.

Here is a story which in rougher shape
Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I saw
Sunning himself in a waste field alone --
Old, and a mine of memories -- who had
served,
Long since, a bygone Rector of the place,
And been himself a part of what he told.

SIR AYLMEY AYLMEY, that almighty man,
The county God -- in whose capacious hall,
Hung with a hundred shields, the family tree
Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate king --
Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd the
spire,
Stood from his walls and wing'd his entry-
gates

And swang besides on many a windy sign --
Whose eyes from under a pyramidal head
Saw from his windows nothing save his own --
What lovelier of his own had he than her,
His only child, his Edith, whom he loved
As heires and not their regretfully ?
But " he that marries her marries her name " --
This fiat somewhat soothed himself and wife,
His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,
Inspired as the Queen upon a card ;
Her all of thought and bearing hardly more
Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled corn,
Little about it stirring save a brook ;
A sleepy land where under the same wheel
The same old rut would deepen year by year ;

Where almost all the village had one name ;
Where Aylmer follow'd Aylmer at the Hall
And Averill Averill at the Rectory
Thrice over ; so that Rectory and Hall,
Bound in an immemorial intimacy,
Were open to each other ; tho' to dream
That Love could bind them closer well had
made

The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle up
With horror, worse than had he heard his
priest
Preach an inverted scripture, sons of men
Daughters of God ; so sleepy was the land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd it so,
Somewhere beneath his own low range of
roofs,

Have also set his many-shielded tree ?
There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage once,
When the red rose was redder than itself,
And York's white rose as red as Lancaster's,
With wounded peace which each had prick'd
to death.

" Not proven," Averill said, or laughingly,
" Some other race of Averills " -- prov'n or no,
What cared he ? what, if other or the same ?
He lean'd not on his fathers but himself.
But Leolin, his brother, living oft
With Averill, and a year or two before
Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away
By one low voice to one dear neighborhood,
Would often, in his walks with Edith, claim
A distant kinship to the gracious blood
That shook the heart of Edith hearing him.

Sanguine he was : a but less vivid hue
Than of that islet in the chestnut-bloom
Flamed in his cheek ; and eager eyes, that
still
Took joyful note of all things joyful, beam'd,
Beneath a manelike mass of rolling gold,
Their best and brightest, when they dwelt on
hers,
Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect else,
But subject to the season or the mood,

third night after this,
motionless and pale,
dozed at intervals,
ling of the sea,
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read his arms abroad
"A sail! a sail!"
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, perfect else,
the mood,

Shone like a mystic star between the less
And greater glory varying to and fro,
We know not wherefore; bounteously made,
And yet so finely, that a troublous touch
Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in a day,
A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.
And these had been together from the first.
Leolin's first nurse was, five years after, hers:
So much the boy foreran; but when his date
Doubled her own, for want of playmates, he
(Since Averill was a decade and a half
His elder, and their parents underground)
Had tost his ball and flown his kite, and
roll'd

His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her dipt
Against the rush of the air in the prone
swing,
Made blossom-ball or daisy chain, arranged
Her garden, sow'd her name and kept it
green

In living letters, told her fairy-tales,
Show'd her the fairy footings on the grass,
The little dells of crowslip, fairy palms,
The petty marestail forest, fairy pines,
Or from the tiny pitted target blew
What look'd a flight of fairy arrows aim'd
All at one mark, all hitting: make-believes
For Edith and himself: or else he forged,
But that was later, boyish histories
Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon, wreck,
Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and true love
Crown'd after trial: sketches rude and faint,
But where a passion yet unborn perhaps
Lay hidden as the music of the moon
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale.
And thus together, save for college-times
Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair
As ever painter painted, poet sang,
Or Heav'n in lavish bounty moulded, grew.
And more and more, the maiden woman-
grown,

He wasted hours with Averill; there, when
first

The tented winter-field was broken up
Into that phalanx of the summer spears
That soon should wear the garland; there
again

When burr and bine were gather'd: lastly
there
At Christmas: ever welcome at the Hall,
On whose dull sameness his full tide of
youth

Broke with a phosphorescence cheering even
My lady; and the Baronet yet had laid
No bar between them: dull and self-in-
volved,

Tall and erect, but bending from his height
With half-allowing smiles for all the world,
And mighty courteous in the main—his
pride

Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring—
He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,
Would care no more for Leolin's walking
with her

Than for his old Newfoundland's, when they
ran

To loose him at the stables, for he rose
Twofooted at the limit of his chain,

Roaring to make a third; and how should
Love,
Whom the cross-lightnings of four chance-
met eyes
Flash into fiery life from nothing, follow
Such dear familiarities of dawn?
Seldom, but when he does, Master of all.

So these young hearts not knowing that
they loved,
Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar
Between them, nor by plight or broken ring
Bound, but an immortal intimacy,
Wander'd at will, but accompanied
By Averill: his, a brother's love, that hung
With wings of brooding shelter o'er her
peace,

Might have been other, save for Leolin's—
Who knows? but so they wander'd, hour by
hour
Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd, and
drank

The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to herself.
For out beyond her lodges, where the brook
Vocal, with here and there a silence, ran
By sallowy rims, arose the laborers' homes,
A frequent haunt of Edith, on low knobs
That dimpling died into each other, huts
At random scatter'd, each a nest in bloom.
Her art, her hand, her counsel all had wrought
About them: here was one that, summer-
blanch'd,

Was parcel-bearded with the traveller's joy
In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here
The warm blue breathings of a hidden hearth
Broke from a bower of vine and honeysuckle:
One look'd all rosetree, and another wore
A close-set robe of jasmine sown with stars:
This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers
About it: this a milky way on earth,
Like visions in the Northern dreamer's
heavens,

A lily-avenue climbing to the doors:
One, almost to the martin-haunted eaves
A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;
Each, its own charm; and Edith's every-
where;

And Edith ever visitant with him.
He but less loved than Edith, of her poor:
For she—so lowly-lovely and so loving,
Queenly responsive when the loyal hand
Rose from the clay it work'd in as she past,
Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing by,
Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height
That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice
Of comfort and an open hand of help,
A splendid presence flattering the poor roofs
Revered as theirs, but kinder than them-
selves

To ailing wife or wailing infancy
Or old bedridden palsy,—was adored;
He, loved for her and for himself. A grasp
Having the warmth and muscle of the heart,
A childly way with children, and a laugh
Ringing like proven golden coinage true,
Were no false passport to that easy realm,

Where once with Leolin at her side the girl,
Nursing a child, and turning to the warmth
The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,
Heard the good mother softly whisper "Bless,
God bless 'em; marriages are made in
Heaven."

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to her.
My Lady's Indian kinsman unannounced
With half a score of swarthy faces came.
His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly,
Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair;
Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the hour,
Tho' seeming boastful: so when first he
dash'd

Into the chronicle of a deedful day,
Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile
Of patron "Good! my lady's kinsman!
good!"

My lady with her fingers interlock'd,
And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,
Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear
To listen: unawares they flitted off,
Busying themselves about the flowerage
That stood from out a stiff brocade in which,
The meteor of a splendid season, she,
Once with this kinsman, ah so long ago,
Stept thro' the stately minuet of those days:
But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him
Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his life:
Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye
Hated him with a momentary hate.
Wife-hunting, as the rumor ran, was he:
I know not, for he spoke not, only shower'd
His oriental gifts on every one
And most on Edith: like a storm he came,
And shook the house, and like a storm he
went.

Among the gifts he left her (possibly
He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return
When others had been tested) there was one,
A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it
Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd itself
Fine as ice-ferns on January panes
Made by a breath. I know not whence at
first,

Nor of what race, the work; but as he told
The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves
He got it; for their captain after fight,
His comrades having fought their last below,
Was climbing up the valley; at whom he
shot:

Down from the beetling crag to which he
clung
Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,
This dagger with him, which when now ad-
mired

By Edith whom his pleasure was to please,
At once the costly Sahib yielded to her.

And Leolin, coming after he was gone,
Tost over all her presents petulantly:
And when she show'd the wealthy scabbard,
saying

"Look what a lovely piece of workman-
ship!"

Slight was his answer "Well—I care not
for it";

Then playing with the blade he prick'd his
hand,

"A gracious gift to give a lady, this!"

"But would it be more gracious," ask'd the
girl,

"Were I to give this gift of his to one
That is no lady?" "Gracious? No," said
he.

"Me?—but I cared not for it. O pardon
me,

I seem to be ungraciousness itself."

"Take it," she added sweetly, "tho' his gift;
For I am more ungracious ev'n than you,
I care not for it either"; and he said

"Why then I love it": but Sir Aylmer past,
And neither loved nor liked the thing he
heard.

The next day came a neighbor. Blues and
reds

They talk'd of: blues were sure of it, he
thought:

Then of the latest fox—where started—
kill'd

In such a bottom: "Peter had the brush,
My Peter, first"; and did Sir Aylmer know
That great pock-pitten fellow had been
caught?

Then made his pleasure echo, hand to hand,
And rolling as it were the substance of it
Between his palms a moment up and down—

"The birds were warm, the birds were warm
upon him;

We have him now": and had Sir Aylmer
heard—

Nay, but he must—the land was ringing of
it—

This blacksmith-border marriage—one they
knew—

Raw from the nursery—who could trust a
child?

That cursed France with her egalities!
And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially,
With nearing chair and lower'd accent)
think—

For people talk'd—that it was wholly wise
To let that handsome fellow Averill walk
So freely with his daughter? people talk'd—

The boy might get a notion into him;
The girl might be entangled ere she knew.
Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening spoke:

"The girl and boy, Sir, know their differ-
ences!"

"Good," said his friend, "but watch!" and
he "Enough,

More than enough, Sir! I can guard my
own."

They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the house
Had fallen first, was Edith that same night:

Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a rough piece
Of early rigid color, under which

Withdrawing by the counter door to that
Which Leolin open'd, she cast back upon him
A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He, as one
Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,
And pelted with outrageous epithets,

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er door to that
ast back upon him
sh'd. He, as one
ected storm,
a epitheta,

Turning beheld the Powers of the House
On either side the hearth, indignant : her,
Cooling her false cheek with a feather-fan,
Him glaring, by his own stale devil spurr'd,
And, like a beast hard-riden, breathing hard.
"Ungenerous, dishonorable, base,
Presumptuous ! trusted as he was with her,
The sole succeder to their wealth, their
lands,

The last remaining pillar of their house,
The one transmitter of their ancient name,
Their child." "Our child !" "Our heir-
ess !" "Ours !" for still,
Like echoes from beyond a hollow, came
Her sicklier iteration. Last he said
"Boy, mark me ! for your fortunes are to
make.

I swear you shall not make them out of mine.
Now inasmuch as you have practised on her,
Perplex her, made her half forget herself,
Swerve from her duty to herself and us —
Things in an Aylmer deem'd impossible,
Far as we track ourselves — I say that this, —
Else I withdraw favor and countenance
From you and yours forever — shall you do.
Sir, when you see her — but you shall not
see her —

No, you shall write, and not to her, but me :
And you shall say that having spoken with
me,

And after look'd into yourself, you find
That you meant nothing — as indeed you
know

That you meant nothing. Such a match as
this !

Impossible, prodigious !" These were words,
As meted by his measure of himself,
Arguing boundless forbearance : after which,
And Leolin's horror-stricken answer, "I
So foul a traitor to myself and her,
Never, O never," for about as long
As the wind-hover hangs in balance, paused
Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm within,
Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and crying
"Boy, should I find you by my doors again
My men shall lash you from them like a dog ;
Hence !" with a sudden execration drove
The footstool from before him, and arose ;
So, stammering "scoundrel" out of teeth
that ground

As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin still
Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old man
Follow'd, and under his own lintel stood
Storming with lifted hands, a hoary face
Meet for the reverence of the hearth, but
now,
Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd moon,
Vext with unworthy madness, and deform'd.

Slowly and conscious of the rageful eye
That watch'd him, till he heard the ponder-
ous door

Close, crashing with long echoes thro' the
land,

Went Leolin ; then, his passions all in flood
And masters of his motion, furiously
Down thro' the bright lawns to his brother's
rao,

And foam'd away his heart at Averill's ear :
Whom Averill solaced as he might, amazed :
The man was his, had been his father's,
friend :

He must have seen, himself had seen it long ;
He must have known, himself had known :
besides,

He never yet had set his daughter forth
Here in the woman-markets of the west,
Where our Caucasians let themselves besold.
Some one, he thought, had slander'd Leolin
to him.

"Brother, for I have loved you more as son
Than brother, let me tell you : I myself —
What is their pretty say next jilted, is it?
Jilted I was : I say it for your peace.

Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the shame
The woman should have borne, humiliated,
I lived for years a wretched, senseless life ;
Till after our good parents' part away
Watching your growth, I seem'd again to
grow.

Leolin, I almost sin in envying you :
The very whitest lamb in all my fold
Loves you : I know her : the worst thought
she has

Is whiter even than her pretty hand :
She must prove true : for, brother, where two
fight

The strongest wins, and truth and love are
strength,

And you are happy : let her parents be."

But Leolin cried out the more upon them —
Insolent, brainless, heartless ! heiress, wealth,
Their wealth, their heiress ! wealth enough
was theirs

For twenty matches. Were he lord of this,
Why twenty boys and girls should marry on
it,

And forty blest ones bless him, and himself
Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He believed
This filthy marriage-hindering Mammon
made

The harlot of the cities : nature crost
Was mother of the foul adulteries
That saturate soul with body. Name, too !
name,

Their ancient name ! they *might* be proud ;
its worth

Was being Edith's. Ah how pale she had
look'd

Darling, to-night ! they must have rated her
Beyond all tolerance. These old pheasant-
lords,

These partridge-breeders of a thousand years,
Who had mildew'd in their thousands, doing
nothing

Since Egbert — why, the greater their dis-
grace !

Fall back upon a name ! rest, rot in that !
Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler ? fools,

With such a vantage-ground for nobleness !
He had known a man, a quintessence of man,

The life of all — who madly loved — and he,
Thwarted by one of these old father-fools,

Had rioted his life out, and made an end.
He would not do it ! her sweet face and faith

Held him from that: but he had powers, he knew it:
 Back would he to his studies, make a name,
 Name, fortune too: the world should ring of him
 To shame these mouldy Aylmers in their graves:
 Chancellor, or what is greatest would he be—
 "O brother, I am grieved to learn your grief—
 Give me my fling, and let me say my say."

At which, like one that sees his own excess,
 And easily forgives it as his own,
 He laugh'd; and then was mute; but presently
 Wept like a storm: and honest Averill seeing
 How low his brother's mood had fallen, fetch'd
 His richest beeswing from a binn reserved
 For banquets, praised the waning red, and told
 The vintage—when *this* Aylmer came of age—
 Then drank and past it: till at length the two,
 Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again, agreed
 That much allowance must be made for men.
 After an angry dream this kindlier glow
 Faded with morning, but his purpose held.

Yet once by night again the lovers met,
 A perilous meeting under the tall pines
 That darken'd all the northward of her Hall.
 Him, to her meek and modest bosom prest
 In agony, she promised that no force,
 Persuasion, no, nor death could alter her:
 He, passionately hopefuller, would go,
 Labor for his own Edith, and return
 In such a sunlight of prosperity
 He should not be rejected. "Write to me!
 They loved me, and because I loved their child
 They hate me: there is war between us,
 dear,
 Which breaks all bonds but ours; we must remain

Sacred to one another." So they talk'd,
 Poor children, for their comfort: the wind blew,
 The rain of heaven, and their own bitter tears,
 Tears, and the careless rain of heaven, mixt
 Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each other
 In darkness, and above them roar'd the pine.

So Leolin went: and as we task ourselves
 To learn a language known but smatteringly
 In phrases here and there at random, toil'd
 Mastering the lawless science of our law,
 That codeless myriad of precedent,
 That wilderness of single instances,
 Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune led,
 May beat a pathway out to wealth and fame.
 The jests, that flash'd about the pleader's room,

Lightning of the hour, the pun, the scurrilous tale,—

Old scandals buried now seven decades deep
 In other scandals that have lived and died,
 And left the living scandal that shall die—
 Were dead to him already: bent as he was
 To make disproof of scorn, and strong in hopes,

And prodigal of all brain-labor he,
 Charier of sleep, and wine and exercise,
 Except when for a breathing-while at eve
 Some niggard fraction of an hour he ran
 Beside the river-bank: and then indeed
 Harder the times were, and the hands of power

Were bloodier, and the according hearts of men
 Seem'd harder too; but the soft river-breeze,
 Which fann'd the gardens of that rival rose
 Yet fragrant in a heart remembering
 His former talks with Edith, on him breathed
 Far purer in his rushings to and fro,
 After his books, to flush his blood with air,
 Then to his books again. My lady's cousin,
 Half-sickening of his pensioned afternoon,
 Drove in up on the student once or twice,
 Ran a Malayan muck against the times,
 Had golden hopes for France and all man-kind,

Answer'd all queries touching those at home
 With a heaved shoulder and a saucy smile,
 And fain had haled him out into the world,
 And air'd him there: his nearer friend would say,
 "Screw not the cord too sharply lest it snap."

Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger forth
 From where his wordless heart had kept it warm,

Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.
 And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of him
 Approvingly, and prophesied his rise:
 For heart, I think, help'd head: her letters too,

Tho' far between, and coming fitfully
 Like broken music, written as she found
 Or made occasion, being strictly watch'd,
 Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till he saw
 An end, a hope, a light breaking upon him.

But they that cast her spirit into flesh,
 Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued themselves.

To sell her, those good parents, for her good.
 Whatever eldest-born of rank or wealth
 Might lie within their compass, him they lured

Into their net made pleasant by the baits
 Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo.
 So month by month the noise about their doors,

And distant blaze of those dull banquets, made

The nightly wiver of their innocent hare
 Falter before he took it. All in vain.
 Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, return'd
 Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit
 So often, that the folly taking wings
 Slept o'er those lazy limits down the wind
 With rumor, and became in other fields

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A mockery to the yeomen over ale,
And laughter to their lords: but those at
home,

As hunters round a hunted creature draw
The cordon close and closer toward the death,
Narrow'd her goings out and comings in;
Forbade her first the house of Averill,
Then closed her access to the wealthier
farms,

Last from her own home-circle of the poor
They barr'd her: yet she bore it: yet her
cheek

Kept color: wondrous I but, O mystery;
What amulet drew her down to that old oak,
So old, that twenty years before, a part
Falling had let appear the brand of John—
Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree, but
now

The broken base of a black tower, a cave
Of touchwood, with a single flourishing
spray.

There the manorial lord too curiously
Raking in that millennial touchwood-dust
Found for himself a bitter treasure-trove:
Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and read
Writhing a letter from his child, for which
Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,
A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to fly,
But scared with threats of jail and halter
gave

To him that fluster'd his poor parish wits
The letter which he brought; and swore
besides

To play their go-between as heretofore
Nor let them know themselves betray'd, and
then,

Soul-stricken at their kindness to him, went
Hating his own lean heart and miserable.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot
dream

Panting he woke, and oft as early as dawn
Aroused the black republic on his elms,
Sweeping the frothfly from the fescue, brush'd
Thro' the dim meadow toward his treasure-
trove,

Seized it, took home, and to my lady, who
made

A downward crescent of her minion mouth,
Listless in all despondence, read; and tore,
As if the living passion symbol'd there
Were living nerves to feel the rent; and
burnt,

Now chafing at his own great self defied,
Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks of
scorn

In babyisms, and dear diminutives
Scatter'd all over the vocabulary
Of such a love as like a chidden babe,
After much wailing, hush'd itself at last
Hopeless of answer: then tho' Averill wrote
And bade him with good heart sustain him-
self—

All would be well—the lover heeded not,
But passionately restless came and went,
And rustling once at night about the place,
There by a keeper shot at, slightly hurt,
Raging return'd: nor was it well for her

Kept to the garden now, and grove of pines,
Watch'd even there: and one was set to
watch

The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd them
all,

Yet bitterer from his readings: once indeed,
Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride in her,
She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her tenderly,
Not knowing what possess'd him: that one
kiss

Was Leolin's one strong rival upon earth;
Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,
Seem'd hope's returning rose: and then en-
sued

A Martin's summer of his faded love,
Or ordeal by kindness; after this
He seldom crost his child without a sneer;
The mother flow'd in shallower acrimonies:
Never one kindly smile, one kindly word:
So that the gentle creature shut from all
Her charitable use, and face to face

With twenty months of silence, slowly lost
Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on life.
Last, some low fever ranging round to spy
The weakness of a people or a house,
Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer, or
men,

Or almost all that is, hurting the hurt—
Save Christ as we believe him—found the
girl

And flung her down upon a couch of fire,
Where careless of the household faces near,
And crying upon the name of Leolin,
She, and with her the race of Aylmer, past.

Star to star vibrates light: may soul to soul
Strike thro' a finer element of her own?
So,—from afar,—touch as at once? or why
That night, that moment, when she named
his name,

Did the keen shriek, "Yes love, yes Edith,
yes."

Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers woke,
And came upon him half-arisen from sleep,
With a weird bright eye, sweating and trem-
bling,

His hair as it were crackling into flames,
His body half flung forward in pursuit,
And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp a
flyer:

Nor knew he wherefore he had made the cry:
And being much befooled and idioted
By the rough amity of the other, sank
As into sleep again. The second day,
My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,
A breaker of the bitter news from home,
Found a dead man, a letter edged with death
Beside him, and the dagger which himself
Gave Edith, reddened with no bandit's blood:
"From Edith" was engraven on the blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon his
death.

And when he came again, his flock believed—
Beholding how the years which are not Time's
Had blasted him—that many thousand days
Were elipt by horror from his term of life.
Yet the sad mother, for the second death

Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness of the first,

And being used to find her pastor texts,
Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying him
To speak before the people of her child,
And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that day rose:
Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded woods
Was all the life of it; for hard on these,
A breathless burthen of low-folded heavens
Stifled and chill'd at once: but every roof
Sent out a lister: many too had known
Edith among the hamlets round, and since
The parents' harshness and the hapless loves
And double death were widely murmur'd,
left

Their own gray tower, or plain-faced tabernacle,

To hear him; all in mourning these, and those

With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove
Or kerchief; while the church, — one night,
except

For greenish glimmerings thro' the lancets,
— made

Still paler the pale head of him, who tower'd
Above them, with his hopes in either grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd Averill,
His face magnetic to the hand from which
Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labor'd thro'
His brief prayer-prelude, gave the verse "Be-
hold,

Your house is left unto you desolate!"
But lapsed into so long a pause again
As half amazed, half frighted all his flock:
Then from his height and loneliness of grief
Bore down in flood, and dash'd his angry
heart

Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became one sea,
Which rolling o'er the palaces of the proud,
And all but those who knew the living God—
Eight that were left to make a purer world—
When since had flood, fire, earthquake,
thunder, wrought

Such waste and havoc as the idolatries,
Which from the low light of mortality
Shot up their shadows to the Heaven of
Heavens,

And worship't their own darkness as the
Highest?

"Gash thyself, priest, and honor thy brute
Baal,

And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,
For with thy worst self hast thou clothed thy
God."

Then came a Lord in no wise like to Baal.
The babe shall lead the lion. Surely now
The wilderness shall blossom as the rose.
Crown thyself, worm, and worship thine own
lusts! —

No coarse and blockish God of acreage
Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel to—
Thy God is far diffused in noble groves
And princely halls, and farms, and flowing
lawns,

And heaps of living gold that daily grow,

And title-scrolls and gorgeous heraldries.

In such a shape dost thou behold thy God.
Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for him; for
thine

Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair
Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while
The deathless ruler of thy dying house
Is wounded to the death that cannot die;
And tho' thou numberest with the followers
Of One who cried "Leave all and follow me."
Thee therefore with His light about thy feet,
Thee with His message ringing in thine ears,
Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord from
Heaven,

Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,
Wonderful, Prince of peace, the Mighty God,
Count the more base idolater of the two;
Crueller: as not passing thro' the fire
Bodies, but souls — thy children's — thro' the
smoke,

The blight of low desires — darkening thine
own

To thine own likeness; or if one of these,
Thy better born unhappily from thee,
Should, as by miracle, grow straight and
fair —

Friends, I was bid to speak of such a one
By those who most have cause to sorrow for
her —

Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,
Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,
Fair as the Angel that said "hail" she
seem'd,

Who entering fill'd the house with sudden
light.

For so mine own was brighten'd: where in-
deed

The roof so lowly but that beam of Heaven
Dawn'd sometimes thro' the doorway? whose
the babe

Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,
Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child of
shame,

The common care whom no one cared for,
leapt

To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,
As with the mother he had never known,
In gambols; for her fresh and innocent eyes
Had such a star of morning in their blue,
That all neglected places of the field

Broke into nature's music when they saw her.
Low was her voice, but won mysterious way
Thro' the seal'd ear, to which a louder one

Was all but silence — free of alms her hand —
The hand that rob'd your cottage-walls with
flowers

Has often toil'd to clothe your little ones;
How often placed upon the sick man's brow
Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow smooth!
Had you one sorrow and she shared it not?
One burthen and she would not lighten it?
One spiritual doubt she did not soothe?

Or when some heat of difference sparkled out,
How sweetly would she glide between your
wraths,

And steal you from each other! for she walk'd
Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of love,
Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee!

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And one—of him I was not bid to speak—
Was always with her, whom you also knew.
Him too you loved, for he was worthy love.
And these had been together from the first;
They might have been together till the last.
Friends, this frail bark of ours, when sorely
tried,
May wreck itself without the pilot's guilt,
Without the captain's knowledge: hope with
me.
Whose shame is that, if he went hence with
shame?
Nor mine the fault, if losing both of these
I cry to va-
"My hous-
"My hous-
"My hous-

While thus he spoke, his hearers wept; but

Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than

That knit themselves for summer shadow,

At their great lord. He, when it seem'd he

No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but fork'd

Of the near storm, and aiming at his head,

Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldier-like,

Erect: but when the preacher's cadence

Softening thro' all the gentle attributes

Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd his

face,

Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron mouth;

And, "O pray God that he hold up," she

thought,

"Or surely I shall shame myself and him."

"Nor yours the blame—for who beside

Can take her place—if echoing me you cry

"Our house is left unto us desolate?"

But thou, O thou that killest, hadst thou

known,

O thou that stonest, hadst thou understood

The things belonging to thy peace and ours!

Is there no prophet but the voice that calls

Doom upon kings, or in the waste 'Repent'?

Is not our own child on the narrow way,

Who down to those that saunter in the broad

Cries 'Come up hither,' as a prophet to us?

Is there no stoning save with flint and rock?

Yes, as the dead we weep for testify—

No desolation but by sword and fire?

Yes, as your moanings witness, and myself

Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my loss.

Give me your prayers, for he is past your

prayers,

Not past the living fount of pity in Heaven.

But I that thought myself long-suffering,

meek,

Exceeding 'poor in spirit'—how the words

Have twisted back upon themselves and

mean

Vileness, we are grown so proud—I wish'd

my voice

A rushing tempest of the wrath of God

To blow these sacrifices thro' the world—

Sent like the twelve-divided concubine

To inflame the tribes; but there—out yonder

—earth

Lightens from her own central Hell—O

there

The red fruit of an old idolatry—

The heads of chiefs and princes fall so fast,

They cling together in the ghastly sack—

The land all shambles—naked marriages

Flash from the bridge, and ever-murder'd

France,

By shores that darken with the gathering

wolf,

Runs in a river of blood to the sick sea.

Is this a time to madden madness then?

Was this a time for these to flaunt their pride?

May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as dense as

those

Which hid the Holiest from the people's eyes

Ere the great death, shroud this great sin

from all:

Doubtless our narrow world must canvass it;

O rather pray for those and pity them

Who thro' their own desire accomplish'd

bring

Their own gray hairs with sorrow to the

grave—

Who broke the bond which they desired to

break—

Which else had link'd their race with times

to come—

Who wove coarse webs to snare her purity,

Grossly contriving their dear daughter's

good—

Poor souls, and knew not what they did,

but sat

Ignorant, devising their own daughter's

death!

May not that earthly chastisement suffice?

Have not our love and reverence left them

bare?

Will not another take their heritage?

Will there be children's laughter in their hall

Forever and forever, or one stone

Left on another, or is it a light thing

That I their guest, their host, their ancient

friend,

I made by these the last of all my race

Must cry to these the last of theirs, as cried

Christ ere His agony to those that swore

Not by the temple but the gold, and made

Their own traditions God, and slew the Lord,

And left their memories a world's curse—

'Behold,

Your house is left unto you desolate?'"

Ended he had not, but she brook'd no

more:

Long since her heart had beat remorselessly,

Her cramp'd-up sorrow pain'd her, and a sense

Of meanness in her unresisting life.

Then their eyes vex'd her; for on entering

He had cast the curtains of their seat aside—

Black velvet of the costliest—she herself

Had seen to that: fain had she closed them

now,

Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd

Her husband inch by inch, but when she laid,

Wife-like, her hand in one of his, he veil'd

His face with the other, and at once, as falls
A creeper when the prop is broken, fell
Thewoman shrieking at his feet, and swoon'd.
Then her own people bore along the nave
Her pendent hands, and narrow meagre face
Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty years :
And her the Lord of all the landscape round
Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all
Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd out
Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle
Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded ways
Stumbling across the market to his death.
Unpitted ; for he groped as blind, and seem'd
Always about to fall, grasping the pews
And oaken finials till he touch'd the door ;
Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot stood,
Strode from the porch, tall and erect again.

But nevermore did either pass the gate
Save under pall with bearers. In one month,
Thro' weary and yet ever wearier hours,
The childless mother went to seek her child ;
And when he felt the silence of his house
About him, and the change and not the
change,

And those fixt eyes of painted ancestors
Staring forever from their gilded walls
On him their last descendant, his own head
Began to droop, to fall ; the man became
Imbecile ; his one word was " desolate " ;
Dead for two years before his death was he ;
But when the second Christmas came, es-
caped

His keepers, and the silence which he felt,
To find a deeper in the narrow gloom
By wife and child ; nor wated at his end
The dark retinue reverencing death
At golden thresholds ; nor from tender hearts,
And those who sorrow'd o'er a vanish'd race,
Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.
Then the great Hall was wholly broken down,
And the broad woodland parcel'd into farms ;
And where the two contrived their daughter's
good,

Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made his
run,
The hedgehog underneath the plantain bores,
The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,
The slow-worm creeps, and the thin weasel
there

Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

SEA DREAMS.

A CITY clerk, but gently born and bred ;
His wife, an unknown artist's orphan child—
One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three years
old :

They, thinking that her clear germander eye
Droopt in the giant-factoried city-gloom,
Came, with a month's leave given them, to
the sea :

For which his gains were dock'd, however
small :

Small were his gains, and hard his work ;
besides,

Their slender household fortunes (for the man
Had risk'd his little) like the little thrift,
Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep ;
And oft, when sitting all alone, his face
Would darken, as he cursed his credulous-
ness,

And that one unctuous mouth which lured
him, rogue,
To buy strange shares in some Peruvian
mine.

Now seaward-bound for health they gain'd a
coast,

All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning cave,
At close of day ; slept, woke, and went the
next,

The Sabbath, pious variers from the church,
To chapel ; where a heated pulpiteer,
Not preaching simple Christ to simple men,
Announced the coming doom, and fulminated
Against the scarlet woman and her creed :
For sideways up he swung his arms, and
shriek'd,

" Thus, thus with violence," ev'n as if he
held

The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself
Were that great Angel ; " thus with violence
Shall Babylon be cast into the sea ;
Then comes the close." The gentle-hearted
wife

Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world ;
He at his own : but when the wordy storm
Had ended, forth they came and paced the
shore,

Ran in and out the long sea-framing caves,
Drank the large air, and saw, but scarce be-
lieved

(The sootflake of so many a summer still
Clung to their fancies) that they saw, the sea.
So now on sand they walk'd, and now on
cliff,

Lingering about the thymy promontories,
Till all the sails were darken'd in the west,
And rosed in the east : then homeward and to
bed :

Where she, who kept a tender Christian hope
Haunting a holy text, and still to that
Returning, as the bird returns, at night,
" Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,"
Said, " Love, forgive him " : but he did not
speak ;

And silenced by that silence lay the wife,
Remembering her dear Lord who died for
all,

And musing on the little lives of men,
And how they mar this little by their deeds.

But while the two were sleeping, a full tide
Rose with ground-swell, which, on the fore-
most rocks

Touching, upjettied in spirits of wild sea-
sm' 'e,
And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam, and
fell

In vast sea-cataracts—ever and anon
Dead claps of thunder from within the cliffs
Heard thro' the living roar. At this the babe,
Their Margaret cradled near them, wail'd
and woke

The mother, and the father suddenly cried,
"A wreck, a wreck!" then turn'd, and groan-
ing said,

"Forgive! How many will say, 'Forgive,'
and find

A sort of absolution in the sound
To hate a little longer! No; the sin
That neither God nor man can well forgive,
Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.
Is it so true that second thoughts are best?
Not first, and third, which are a riper first?
Too ripe, too late! they come too late for
use.

Ah love, there surely lives in man and beast
Something divine to warn them of their foes;
And such a sense, when I first fronted him,
Said, 'Trust him not'; but after, when I
came

To know him more, I lost it, knew him less;
Fought with what seem'd my own un-
charity;

Sate his table; drank his costly wines;
Made more and more allowance for his talk;
Went further, fool! and trusted him with all,
All my poor scrapings from a dozen years
Of dust and deskwork; there is no sucu-
mine,

None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing gold,
Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the sea roars
Ruin: a fearful night!"

Said the good wife, "if every star in heaven
Can make it fair: you do but hear the tide.
Had you ill dreams?"

"O yes," he said, "I dream'd
Of such a tide swelling toward the land,
And I from out the boundless outer deep
Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd one
Of those dark caves that run beneath the
cliffs.

I thought the motion of the boundless deep
Bore through the cave, and I was heaved
upon it

In darkness: then I saw one lovely star
Larger and larger. 'What a world,' I
thought,

'To live in!' but in moving on I found
Only the landward exit of the cave,
Bright with the sun upon the stream beyond:
And near the light a giant woman sat.
All over earthy, like a piece of earth,
A pickaxe in her hand: then out I slipt
Into a land all sun and blossom, trees
As high as heaven, and every bird that sings:
And here the night-light flickering in my
eyes
Awoke me."

"That was then your dream," she said,
"Not sad, but sweet."

"So sweet, I lay," said he,
"And mused upon it, drifting up the stream
In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced
The broken vision; for I dream'd that still

The motion of the g-eat deep bore me on,
And that the woman walk'd upon the brink:
I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd her of
it:

'It came,' she said, 'by working in the
mines':
O then to ask her of my shares, I thought;
And ask'd; but not a word; she shook her
head.

And then the motion of the current ceased,
And there was rolling thunder; and we
reach'd

A mountain, like a wall of burrs and thorns;
But she with her strong feet up the steep hill
Trod out a path: I follow'd; and at top,
She pointed seaward: there a fleet of glass,
That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,
Sailing along before a gloomy cloud

That not one moment ceased to thunder, past
In sunshine; right across its track there lay,
Down in the water, a long reef of gold,
Or what seem'd gold: and I was glad at first
To think that in our often-ransacked world
Still so much gold was left; and then I fear'd
Lest the gay navy there should splinter on it,
And fearing waved my arm to warn them off;
An idle signal, for the brittle fleet
(I thought I could have died to save it)
near'd,

Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and vanish'd,
and I woke,

I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see
My dream was Life; the woman honest
Work;

And my poor venture but a fleet of glass,
Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold."

"Nay," said the kindly wife to comfort
him,

"You raised your arm, you tumbled down
and broke
The glass with little Margaret's medicine in
it:

And, breaking that, you made and broke your
dream:

A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks."

"No trifle," groan'd the husband; "yes-
terday

I met him suddenly in the street, and ask'd
That which I ask'd the woman in my dream.
Like her, he shook his head. 'Show me the
books!'

He dodged me with a long and loose account.
'The books, the books!' but he, he could
not wait,

Bound on a matter of life and death:
When the great Books (see Daniel seven and
ten)

Were open'd, I should find he meant me
well:

And then began to bloat himself, and ooze
All over with the fat affectionate smile
That makes the widow lean. 'My dearest
friend,

Have faith, have faith! We live by faith,'
said he;

'And all things work together for the good

Of those? — it makes me sick to quote him
— last

Gript my hand hard, and with God-bless-you
went.

I stood like one that had received a blow:
I found a hard friend in his loose accounts,
A loose one in the hard grip of his hand,
A curse in his God-bless-you: then my eyes
Pursued him down the street, and far away,
Among the honest shoulders of the crowd,
Read rascal in the motions of his back,
And scoundrel in the supple-sliding knee."

"Was he so bound, poor soul?" said the
good wife;

"So are we all: but do not call him, love,
Before you prove him, rogue, and proved,
forgive.

His gain is loss: for he that wrongs his friend
Wrongs himself more, and ever hears about
A silent court of justice in his breast:
Himself the judge and jury, and himself
The prisoner at the bar, ever condemn'd:
And that drags down his life: then what
what comes

Hereafter: and he meant, he said he meant,
Perhaps he meant, or partly meant, you
well."

"With all his conscience and one eye
askew" —

Love, let me quote these lines, that you may
learn

A man is likewise counsel for himself,
Too often in that silent court of yours —
"With all his conscience and one eye askew,
So false, he partly took himself for true;
Whose pious talk, when most his heart was
dry,

Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his eye;
Who, never naming God except for gain,
So never took that useful name in vain;
Made Him his catspaw and the Cross his
tool,
And Christ the bait to trap his dupe and fool;
Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace he forged,
And snakelike slimed his victim ere he
gorged;

And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the rest
Arising, did his holy oil best,
Dropping the too rough H in Hell and
Heaven,
To spread the Word by which himself had
thriven.

How like you this old satire?"

"Nay," she said,
"I loathe it: he had never kindly heart,
Nor ever cared to better his own kind,
Who first wrote satire with no pity in it.
But will you hear *my* dream, for I had one
That altogether went to music? Still
It awed me."

Then she told it, having dream'd
Of that same coast.

— "But round the North, a light,

A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapor, lay,
And ever in it a low musical note
Swell'd up and died; and, as it swell'd, a
ridge

Of breaker issued from the belt, and still
Grew with the growing note, and when the
note

Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on those
cliffs

Broke, mixt with awful light (the same as
that

Living within (the belt) whereby she saw
That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs no
more,

But huge cathedral fronts of every age,
Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,
One after one: and then the great ridge drew,
Lessening to the lessening music, back,
And past into the belt and swell'd again
Slowly to music: ever when it broke

The status, king or saint, or founder, fell;
Then from the gaps and chasms of ruin left
Came men and women in dark clusters round,
Some crying: "Set them up! they shall not
fall!"

And others, "Let them lie, for they have
fall'n."

And still they strove and wrangled: and she
grieved

In her strange dream, she knew not why, to
find

Their wildest wailings never out of tune
With that sweet note; and ever as their
shrieks

Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave
Returning, while none mark'd it, on the
crowd

Broke, mixt with awful light, and show'd
their eyes

Glaring, and passionate looks, and swept
away

The men of flesh and blood, and men of
stone,

To the waste deeps together.

"Then I fixt

My wistful eyes on two fair images,
Both crown'd with stars and high among the
stars, —

The Virgin Mother standing with her child
High up on one of those dark minster-
fronts —

Till she began to totter, and the child
Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry
Which mixt with little Margaret's, and I
woke,

And my dream awed me: — well — but what
are dreams?

Yours came but from the breaking of a glass,
And mine but from the crying of a child."

"Child? No!" said he, "but this tide's
roar, and his,

Our Boanerges, with his threats of doom:
And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms

(*zoo*) I grant but little music there)
Went both to make your dream: but if there
were

THE GRANDMOTHER.

331

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A music harmonizing our wild cries,
Sphero-music such as that you dream'd about,
Why, that would make our passions far too
like
The disports dear to the musician. No—
One shriek of hate would jar all the hymns
of heaven:
True Devils with no ear, they howl in tune
With nothing but the Devil!"

"'True' indeed!
One of our town, but later by an hour
Here than ourselves, spoke with me on the
shore;
While you were running down the sands,
and made
The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbelow
flap,
Good man, to please the child. She brought
strange news.
Why were you silent when I spoke to-night?
I had set my heart on your forgiving him
Before you knew. We *must* forgive the
dead."

"Dead! who is dead?"

"The man your eye pursued.
A little after you had parted with him,
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-disease."

"Dead? he? of heart-disease? what heart
had he
To die off? dead!"

"Ah, dearest, if there be
A devil in man, there is an angel too,
And if he did that wrong you charge him
with,
His angel broke his heart. But your rough
voice
(You spoke so loud) has roused the child
again.
Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not sleep
Without her 'little birdie'? well then, sleep,
And I will sing you 'birdie.'"

Saying this,
The woman half turn'd round from him she
loved,
Left him one hand, and reaching thro' the
night
Her other, found (for it was close beside)
And half embraced the basket cradle-head
With one soft arm, which, like the plant
bough
That moving moves the nest and nestling,
sway'd
The cradle, while she sang this baby song.

What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger.
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day?
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger.
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby too shall fly away.

"She sleeps: let us too, let all evil, sleep.
He also sleeps — another sleep than ours.
He can do no more wrong: forgive him, dear,
And I shall sleep the sounder!"

Then the man,
"His deeds yet live, the worst is yet to come.
Yet let your sleep for this one night be sound:
I do forgive him!"

"Thanks, my love," she said,
"Your own will be the sweeter," and they
aslept.

THE GRANDMOTHER.

I.

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne?
Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man.
And Willy's wife has written: she never was over-wise,
Never the wife for Willy: he would n't take my advice.

II.

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,
Had n't a head to manage, and drank himself into his grave.
Pretty enough, very pretty! but I was against it for one.
Eh! — but he would n't hear me — and Willy, you say, is gone.

III.

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the flock;
Never a man could fling him: for Willy stood like a rock.
"Here's a leg for a baby of a week!" says doctor: and he would be bound,
There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round.

THE GRANDMOTHER.

IV.

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of his tongue !
 I ought to have gone before him : I wonder he went so young.
 I cannot cry for him, Annie : I have not long to stay ;
 Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away.

V.

Why do you look at me, Annie ? you think I am hard and cold ;
 But all my children have gone before me, I am so old :
 I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest ;
 Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

VI.

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,
 All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.
 I mean your grandfather, Annie : it cost me a world of woe,
 Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

VII.

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right well
 That Jenny had tript in her time : I knew, but I would not tell.
 And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar !
 But the tongue is a fire, as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.

VIII.

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,
 That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,
 That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,
 But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

IX.

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week and a day ;
 And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was the middle of May.
 Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been !
 But soiling another, Annie, will never make one's self clean.

X.

And I cried myself wellnigh blind, and all of an evening late
 I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road at the gate.
 The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,
 And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrup the nightingale.

XI.

All of a sudden he stopt : there past by the gate of the farm,
 Willy, — he did n't see me, — and Jenny hung on his arm.
 Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew how ;
 Ah, there 's no fool like the old one — it makes me angry now.

XII.

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that he meant ;
 Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking courtesy and went.
 And I said, " Let us part : in a hundred years it 'll all be the same,
 You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name."

XIII.

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moonshine :
 " Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine.
 And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill ;
 But marry me out of hand : we too shall be happy still."

XIV.

" Marry you, Willy !" said I, " but I needs must speak my mind,
 And I fear you 'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind."
 But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd, " No, love, no " ;
 Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

XV.

So Willy and I were wedded : I wore a lilac gown ;
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers a crown.
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

XVI.

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death.
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a breath.
I had not wept, little Annie, not since I had been a wife ;
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought for his life.

XVII.

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or pain :
I look'd at the still little body—his trouble had all been in vain.
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another morn :
But I wept like a child for the child that was dead before he was born.

XVIII.

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay :
Kind, like a man, was he ; like a man, too, would have his way :
Never jealous—not he : we had many a happy year ;
And he died, and I could not weep—my own time seem'd so near.

XIX.

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then could have died :
I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side.
And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget :
But as to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet.

XX.

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you :
Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,
While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill.

XXI.

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too—they sing to their team :
Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream.
They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed—
I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

XXII.

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left alive ;
For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five :
And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh threescore and ten ;
I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

XXIII.

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve ;
I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve :
And the neighbors come and laugh and gossip, and so do I ;
I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by.

XXIV.

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad :
But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had ;
And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease ;
And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace.

XXV.

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,
And happy has been my life ; but I would not live it again.
I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and long for rest :
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

NORTHERN FARMER.

So Willie has gone, my beauty, my eyes are lower;
But how can I weep for Willy, he's but gone for an hour,—
Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next;
I, too, shall go in a minute. What time have I to be vex?

XXVII.

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise.
Get me my glasses, Annie: thank God that I keep my eyes.
There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have past away.
But stay with the old woman now: you cannot have long to stay.

NORTHERN FARMER.

OLD STYLE.

I.

Where 'asta bein' saw long and meil' liggin' 'ere aloin?
Noorse? thuort now: o' a noorse: whoy, doctor 's abein an' agoiln:
Says that I moilnt 'a naw moor yaile: but I beilnt a fool:
Git ma my yaile, for I beilnt a-goin' to break my rule.

II.

Doctors, they knows nowt, for a says what 's nawways true:
Naw soort o' koin'd o' use to say the things that a do.
I've 'ed my point o' yaile ivry noight sin' I bein 'ere,
An' I 've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for forty year.

III.

Parson 's a bein' loikewise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my bed.
"The amoghty 's a taikin' o' you to 'issen, my friend," 'a said,
An' a tow'd ma my sins, an' 's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond;
I done my duty by un, as I 'a done by the lond.

IV.

Larn'd a ma' beil. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to farn.
But a cost oop, thot a did, 'boot Bessy Marris's barn.
Thof a knows I hallus voiltd wi' Squire an' choorch an' stalte,
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raile.

V.

An' I hallus comed to 's choorch afor my Sally wur deild,
An' 'eerd un a bummin' awaay loike a buzzard-cluck* ower my yaile,
An' I niver know'd whot a meiln'd but a thowt a 'ad summut to say,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I comed awaay.

VI.

Bessy Marris's barn! tha knows she laiid it to meil.
Mowt a bein, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheil.
'Siver, I kep un, I kep un, my lass, the mun understand;
I done my duty by un as I 'a done by the lond.

VII.

But Parson a comes an' a goes, an' a says it eiksy an' freil.
"The amoghty 's a taikin' o' you to 'issen, my friend," 'a said,
I weilnt say me be loars, thof summun said it in 'alste.
But a reids wonn sarmin a weelk, an' I 'a stubb'd Thome waleste.

VIII.

D' ya moind the waleste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not born then:
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eerd un mysen:
Moilnt loike a butter-bump, † for I 'eerd un aboot an aboot,
But I stubb'd un oop wi' the lot, and raived an' rembled un oot.

* Cockchafer.

† Bittern.

THE WOOL
The cap
Man con
ne
And afte
Me only
Consume
Here at
A white-

IX.

Keisler's it wur; fo' they fun un thear a lakid on 'is falce
Doon i' the woid 'enemies *afoor I comed to the plaice.
Noaks o' Thimbleby — toner 'ed shot an as deid as a nakil.
Noaks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize — but git ma my yalle.

X.

Dubbut look at the wallste: theer war n't not feid for a cow;
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuz, an' look at it now —
War n't worth nowt a haacre, an' now theer's lots o' feid,
Fourscore yows upon it an' some on it doon in seid.

XI.

Nobbut a bit on it 's left, an' I mean'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
If godamighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloin,
Mei, wi' haäte oonderd haäcre o' Squire's an' loäid o' my oän.

XII.

Do godamighty know what a 's doing a-taäkin' o' meä?
I beän wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;
An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all — a' dear a' dear!
And I 'a monaged for Squire come Michaelmas thirty year.

XIII.

A mowt 'a taäken Joänes, as 'ant a 'aäpoth o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäken Robins — a niver mended a fence:
But godamighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now
Wi' auf the cows to cauve an' Thornaby holms to plow!

XIV.

Look 'ow quolot amoiles when they sees ma a passin' by,
Says to thessen neä doot "what a mon a be sewer-ly!"
For they knows what I beän to Squire sin fust a comed to the 'All;
I done my duty by Squire an' I done my duty by all.

XV.

Squire 's in Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For who 's to howd the lond at aä thet muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weäner give it to Joänes,
Noither a moänt to Robins — a niver rembles the stoäns.

XVI.

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maazin' the blessed feälds wi' the Devil's oän teäm
Gin I mun doy I mun doy, an' loife they says is sweet,
But gin I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abear to see it.

XVII.

What atta stannin' theer for, an' doean bring ma the yalle?
Doctor 's a 'tottler, lass, and a 's hallus i' the owd taäle;
I weänt break rules for Doctor, a knows naw moor nor a floy;
Git ma my yalle I tell tha, an' gin I mun doy I mun doy.

TITHONUS.

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream

The ever silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.
Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man —
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, "Give me immortality."
Then didst thou grant me asking with a
smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they
give.

But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their
wills,
And beat me down and marred and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me
maim'd

To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with
tears

To hear me? Let me go: take back thy
gift:

Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for
all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart: there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was
born.

Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders
pure,

And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild
team

Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd
manes,

And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy
tears,

And make me tremble lest a saying learnt
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
"The Gods themselves cannot recall their
gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings; saw
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt
my blood

Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-
warm

With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and
sweet,

Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not forever in thine East:
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Cold, thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold

Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the
steam

Floats up from those dim fields about the
homes

Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground:
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn:
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

THE VOYAGE.

I.

We left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbor-mouth:
And madly danced our hearts with joy,
As fast we fled to the South:
How fresh was every sight and sound
On open main or winding shore!
We knew the merry world was round,
And we might sail forevermore.

II.

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail:
The Lady's-head upon the prow
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the gale.
The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,
And swept behind: so quick the run,
We felt the good ship shake and reel,
We seem'd to sail into the Sun!

III.

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light!
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn!

IV.

New stars all night above the brim
Of waters lighten'd into view;
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field,
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield;

V.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly seen,
We past long lines of Northern capes
And dewy Northern meadows green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep
Across the boundless east we drove,
Where those long swells of breaker sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

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VI.
By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine
With ashy rains, that spreading made
Fantastic plume or sable pine ;
By sands and steaming flats, and floods
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
And hills and scarlet-m'ngled woods
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

VII.
O hundred shores of happy climes,
How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark !
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times
With wakes of fire we tore the dark ;
At times a carven craft would shoot
From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,
But we nor paused for fruits nor flowers.

VIII.
For one fair Vision ever fled
Down the waste waters day and night,
And still we follow'd where she led
In hope to gain upon her flight.
Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixt upon the far sea-line ;
But each man murmured, " O my Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine."

IX.
And now we lost her, now she gleam'd
Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea,
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
She bore the blade of Liberty.

X.
And only one among us — him
We pleased not — he was seldom pleased :
He saw not far : his eyes were dim :
But ours he swore were all diseased.
" A ship of fools," he shriek'd in spite,
" A ship of fools," he sneer'd and wept.
And overboard one stormy night
He cast his body, and on we swept.

XI.
And never sail of ours was fur'd
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;
We loved the glories of the world,
But laws of nature were our scorn ;
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
But whence were those that drove the sail
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
And to and thro' the counter-gale ?

XII.
Again to colder climes we came,
For still we follow'd where she led :
Now mate is blind and captain lame,
And half the crew are sick or dead.
But blind or lame or sick or sound
We follow that which flies before :
We know the merry world is round,
And we may sail forevermore.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ.

ALL along the valley, stream that flashes
white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of
the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty
years ago.
All along the valley while I walk'd to-day,
The two and thirty years were a mist that
rolls away ;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of
the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave
and tree,
The voice of the dead was as a living voice
to me.

THE FLOWER.

ONCE in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed.
Up there came a flower,
The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
Thro' my garden-bower,
And muttering discontent
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
It wore a crown of light,
But thieves from o'er the wall
Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
" Splendid is the flower."

Read my little fable :
He that runs may read.
Most can raise the flowers now,
For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
And some are poor indeed ;
And now again the people
Call it but a weed.

REQUIESCAT.

FAIR is her cottage in its place,
Where yon broad water sweetly slowly
glides.
It sees itself from thatch to base
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah, how soon to die !
Her quiet dream of life this hour may
cease.
Her peaceful being slowly passes by
To some more perfect peace.

THE SAILOR-BOY.

He rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,
And reach'd the ship and caught the rope,
And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud
He heard a fierce mermaid cry,
"O Boy, tho' thou art young and proud,
I see the place where thou wilt lie.

"The sands and yeasty surges mix
In caves about the dreary bay,
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
And in thy heart the scrawl shall play."

"Fool," he answer'd, "death is sure
To those that stay and those that roam,
But I will nevermore endure
To sit with empty hands at home.

"My mother clings about my neck,
My sisters crying, 'Stay, for shame';
My father raves of death and wreck,
They are all to blame, they are all to blame.

"God help me! save I took my part
Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
Far worse than any death to me."

THE ISLET.

"WHITHER, O whither, love, shall we go,
For a score of sweet little summers or so?"
The sweet little wife of the singer said
On the day that follow'd the day she was wed;

"Whither, O whither, love, shall we go?"
And the singer shaking his curly head
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys
There at his right with a sudden crash,
Singing, "And shall it be over the seas
With a crew that is neither rude nor rash,
But a bevy of Erodes apple-cheek'd,
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I know,
A mountain islet pointed and peak'd;
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,
Fairly-delicate palaces shine
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd
With many a rivulet high against the Sun
The facets of the glorious mountain flash
Above the valleys of palm and pine."
"Thither, O thither, love, let us go."

"No, no, no!
For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,
There is but one bird with a musical throat,
And his compass is but of a single note,
That it makes one weary to hear."
"Mock me not! mock me not! love, let us go."

"No, love, no.
For the bud ever breaks into bloom on the tree,
And a storm never wakes on the lonely sea,
And a worm is there in the lonely wood,
That pierces the liver and blackens the blood,
And makes it a sorrow to be."

THE RINGLET.

"Your ringlets, your ringlets,
That look so golden-gay,
If you will give me one, but one,
To kiss it night and day,
Then never chilling touch of Time
Will turn it silver-gray;
And then shall I know it is all true gold
To flame and sparkle and stream as of old,
Till all the comets in heaven are cold,
And all her stars decay."
"Then take it, love, and put it by;
This cannot change, nor yet can I."

2.

"My ringlet, my ringlet,
That art so golden-gay,
Now never chilling touch of Time
Can turn thee silver-gray;
And a lad may wink, and a girl may hint,
And a fool may say his say;
For my doubts and fears were all amias,
And I swear henceforth by this and this,
That a doubt will only come for a kiss,
And a fear to be kiss'd away."
"Then kiss it, love, and put it by;
If this can change, why so can I."

II.

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
I kiss'd you night and day,
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,
You still are golden-gay,
But Ringlet, O Ringlet,
You should be silver-gray:
For what is this which now I'm told,
I that took you for true gold,
She that gave you 's bought and sold,
Sold, sold.

2.

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
She blush'd a rosy red,
When Ringlet, O Ringlet,
She clipt you from her head,
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,
She gave you me, and said,
"Come, kiss it, love, and put it by;
If this can change, why so can I."
O fie, you golden nothing, fie
You golden lie.

3.

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
I count you much to blame,
For Ringlet, O Ringlet,
You hurt me much to shame.

breaks into bloom on the
wakes on the lonely sea,
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liver and blackens the
row to be."

RINGLET.

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A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA. — THE CAPTAIN.

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So Ringlet, O Ringlet,
I doom you to the flame.
For what is this which now I learn,
Has given all my faith a turn?
Burn, you glossy heretic, burn,
Burn, burn.

A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA.

MARCH 7, 1863.

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the sea,
Alexandra!
Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,
But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee,
Alexandra!
Welcome her, thunders of fort and of fleet!
Welcome her, thundering cheer of the street!
Welcome her, all things youthful and sweet,
Scatter the blossom under her feet!
Break, happy land, into earlier flowers!
Make music, O bird, in the new-budded
bowers!

Blazon your mottoes of blessing and prayer!
Welcome her, welcome her, all that is ours!
Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare!
Flags, flutter out upon turrets and towers!
Flames, on the windy headland flare!
Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire!
Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air!
Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!
Kush to the roof, sudden rocket, and higher
Melt into the stars for the land's desire!
Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,
Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the strand,
Roar as the sea when he welcomes the land,
And welcome her, welcome the land's desire,
The sea-kings' daughter as happy as fair,
Blissful bride of a blissful heir,
Bride of the heir of the kings of the sea—
O joy to the people, and joy to the throne.
Come to us, love us, and make us your own:
For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,
Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,
We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee,
Alexandra!

ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING OF
THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and sweet,
In this wide hall with earth's invention
stored,
And praise th' invisible universal Lord,
Who lets once more in peace the nations
meet,
Where Science, Art, and Labor have out-
poured
Their myriad horns of plenty at our feet.

O silent father of our Kings to be
Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,
For this, for all, we weep our thanks to thee!

The world-compelling plan was thine,
And lo! the long laborious miles,

Of Palace; lo! the giant aisles,
Rich in model and design;
Harvest-tool and husbandry,
Loom and wheel and engin'ry,
Secrets of the sullen mine,
Steel and gold, and corn and wine,
Fabric rough, or Fairy fine,
Sunny tokens of the Line,
Polar marvels, and a feast
Of wonder out of West and East,
And shapes and hues of Art divine!
All of beauty, all of use,
That one fair planet can produce.
Brought from under every star,
Blown from over every main,
And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,
The works of peace with works of war.

O ye, the wise who think, the wise who reign,
From growing commerce loose her latest
chain,
And let the fair white-winged peacemaker fly
To happy havens under all the sky,
And mix the seasons and the golden hours,
Till each man finds his own in all men's good,
And all men work in noble brotherhood,
Breaking their mailed fleets and armed
towers,
And ruling by obeying Nature's powers,
And gathering all the fruits of peace and
crown'd with all her flowers.

A DEDICATION.

DEAR, near and true — no truer Time him-
self
Can prove you, tho' he make you evermore
Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life
Shoots to the fall — take this, and pray that
he,
Who wrote it, honoring your sweet faith in
him,
May trust himself; and spite of praise and
scorn,
As one who feels the immeasurable world,
Attain the wise indifference of the wise;
And after Autumn past — if left to pass
His autumn into seeming-leafless days —
Draw toward the long frost and longest
night,
Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the fruit
Which in our winter woodland looks a
flower.*

THE CAPTAIN.

A LEGEND OF THE NAVY.

He that only rules by terror
Doeth grievous wrong.
Deep as Hell I count his error,
Let him hear my song.

* The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Eucalyptus Euro-
pæus*).

Brave the Captain was : the seamen
 Made a gallant crew,
 Gallant sons of English freemen,
 Sailors bold and true,
 But they hated his oppression,
 Stern he was and rash ;
 So for every light transgression
 Doom'd them to the lash.
 Day by day more harsh and cruel
 Seem'd the Captain's mood.
 Secret wrath like smother'd fuel
 Burnt in each man's blood.
 Yet he hoped to purchase glory,
 Hoped to make the name
 Of his vessel great in story,
 Where'er he came.
 So they past by capes and islands,
 Many a harbor-mouth,
 Sailing under palmy highlands
 Far within the South.
 On a day when they were going
 O'er the lone expanse,
 In the North, her canvas flowing,
 Rose a ship of France.
 Then the Captain's color heighten'd,
 Joyful came his speech :
 But a cloudy gladness lighten'd
 In the eyes of each.
 " Chase," he said : the ship flew forward,
 And the wind did blow ;
 Stately, lightly, went she Norward,
 Till she near'd the foe.
 Then they look'd at him they hated,
 Had what they desired :
 Mute with folded arms they waited —
 Not a gun was fired.
 But they heard the foeman's thunder
 Roaring out their doom ;
 All the air was torn in sunder,
 Crashing went the boom,
 Spars were splinter'd, decks were shatter'd,
 Bullets fell like rain ;
 Over mast and deck were scatter'd
 Blood and brains of men.
 Spars were splinter'd : decks were broken :
 Every mother's son —
 Down they dropt — no word was spoken —
 Each beside his gun.
 On the decks as they were lying,
 Were their faces grim.
 In their blood, as they lay dying,
 Did they smile on him.
 Those, in whom he had reliance
 For his noble name,
 With one smile of still defiance
 Sold him unto shame.
 Shame and wrath his heart confounded,
 Pale he turn'd and red,
 Till himself was deadly wounded
 Falling on the dead.
 Dismal error ! fearful slaughter !
 Years have wander'd by,
 Side by side beneath the water
 Crew and Captain lie ;
 There the sunlit ocean tosses
 O'er them mouldering,
 And the lonely seabird crosses
 With one waft of the wing.

THREE SONNETS TO A COQUETTE.

CARESS'd or chidden by the dainty hand,
 And singing airy trifles this or that,
 Light Hope at Beauty's call would perch and
 stand,

And run thro' every change of sharp and
 flat :

And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,
 When Sleep had bound her in his rosy band,
 And chased away the still-recurring gnat,
 And woke her with a lay from fairy land.
 But now they live with Beauty less and less,
 For Hope is other Hope and wanders far,
 Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious
 creeds ;

And Fancy watches in the wilderness,
 Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,
 That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

2.

The form, the form alone is eloquent !
 A nobler yearning never broke her rest
 Than but to dance and sing, be gayly drest,
 And win all eyes with all accomplishment :
 Yet in the waltzing-circle as we went,
 My fancy made me for a moment blest
 To find my heart so near the bateous
 breast

That once had power to rob it of content.
 A moment came the tenderness of tears,
 The phantom of a wish that once could
 move,

A ghost of passion that no smiles re-
 store —

For ah ! the slight coquette, she cannot
 love,

And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand years,
 She still would take the praise, and care
 no more.

3.

Wan Sculptor, weepst thou to take the cast
 Of those dead lineaments that near thee
 lie ?

O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the past,
 In painting some dead friend from mem-
 ory ?

Weep on : beyond his object Love can last :
 His object lives : more cause to weep have
 I :

My tears, no tears of love, are flowing fast,
 No tears of love, but tears that Love can
 die.

I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,
 Nor care to sit beside her where she sits —

Ah pity — hint it not in human tones,
 But breathe it into earth and close it up
 With secret death forever, in the pits
 Which some green Christmas crams with
 weary bones.

ON A MOURNER.

NATURE, so far as in her lies,
 Imitates God, and turns her face
 To every land beneath the skies,

A MOURNER.

ETS TO A COQUETTE.

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RNER.

her lies,
turns her face
h the skies,

SONGS.—BOADICEA.

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Counts nothing that she meets with base,
But lives and loves in every place;

2.
Fills out the homely quick-set screens,
And makes the purple lilac ripe,
Steps from her airy hill, and greens
The swamp, where hums the dropping
snipe,
With moss and braided marish-pipe;

3.
And on thy heart a finger lays,
Saying, "Beat quicker, for the time
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways
Are pleasant, and the beech and lime
Put forth and feel a gladder clime."

4.
And murmurs of a deeper voice,
Going before to some far shrine,
Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,
Till all thy life one way incline
With one wide will that closes thine.

5.
And when the zoning eve has died
Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and bride,
From out the borders of the morn,
With that fair child betwixt them born.

6.
And when no mortal motion jars
The blackness round the tombing sod,
Thro' silence and the trembling stars

Comes Faith from tracts no feet have trod,
And Virtue, like a household god,

7.
Promising empire; such as those
That once at dead of night did greet
Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose
With sacrifice, while all the fleet
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

SONG.

LADY, let the rolling drums
Beat to battle where thy warrior stands:
Now thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands.

Lady, let the trumpets blow,
Clasp thy little babes about thy knee:
Now their warrior father meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

SONG.

HOME they brought him slain with spears.
They brought him home at even-fall;
All alone she sits and hears
Echoes in his empty hall,
Sounding on the morrow.

The Sun peep'd in from open field,
The boy began to leap and prance,
Rode upon his father's lance,
Beat upon his father's shield —
"O hush, my joy, my sorrow."

EXPERIMENTS.

BOADICEA.

WHILE about the shore of Mona those Neronian legionaries
Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess,
Far in the East Boadicea, standing loftily charioted,
Mad and maddening all that heard her in her fierce volubility,
Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony Camulodune,
Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy.

"They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's barbarous populaces,
Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity me supplicating?
Shall I heed them in their anguish? shall I brook to be supplicated?
Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!
Must their ever-ravelling eagle's beak and talon annihilate us?
Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily quivering?
Bark an answer, Britain's raven! bark and blacken innumerable,
Blacken round the Roman carrion, make the carcass a skeleton,
Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin, from the wilderness, wallow in it,
Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Taranis be propitiated.
Lo their colony half-defended! lo their colony, Camulodune!
There the horde of Roman robbers mock at a barbarous adversary.

There the hive of Roman liars worship a gluttonous emperor-idiot.
Such is Rome, and this her deity: hear it, Spirit of Cássivéládn!

"Hear it, Gods! the Gods have heard it, O Icenian, O Coritanian!
Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd, Catieuchlanian, Trinobant.
These have told us all their anger in miraculous utterances,
Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur heard aërially,
Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred,
Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies.
Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phantom bodies of horses and men;
Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the reflux estuary;
Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily tottering —
There was one who watch'd and told me — down their statue of Victory fell.
Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo the colony Cámulodúne,
Shall we teach it a Roman lesson? shall we care to be pitiful?
Shall we deal with it as an infant? shall we dandle it amorously?"

"Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!
While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly meditating,
There I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical ceremony,
Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible prophetesses.
'Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets!
Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho' the gathering enemy narrow thee,
Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt be the mighty one yet!
Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be celebrated,
Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable,
Thine the lands of lasting summer, many-blossoming Paradises,
Thine the North and thine the South and thine the battle-thunder of God.'
So they chanted: how shall Britain light upon auguries happier?
So they chanted in the darkness, and there cometh a victory now.

"Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!
Me the wife of rich Prasutagus, me the lover of liberty,
Me they seized and me they tortured, me they lash'd and humiliated,
Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian violators!
See they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in ignominy!
Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood to be satiated.
Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony Cámulodúne!
There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the flourishing territory,
Thither at their will they haled the yellow-ringleted Britoness —
Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe, unexhausted, inexorable.
Shout Icenian, Catieuchlanian, shout Coritanian, Trinobant,
Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry precipitously
Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the smoke in a hurricane whirl'd.
Lo the colony, there they rioted in the city of Cúnobeline?
There they drank in cups of emerald, there at tables of ebony lay,
Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effeminacy.
There they dwelt and there they rioted; there — there — they dwell no more.
Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the works of the statuary,
Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold it abominable,
Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptuousness,
Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd and humiliated,
Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of the little one out,
Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my chargers, trample them under us."

So the Queen Boadicea, standing loftily charioted,
Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling glances lioness-like,
Yelled and shrieked between her daughters in her fierce volubility,
Till her people all around the royal chariot agitated,
Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous lineaments,
Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they shiver in January,
Roar'd as when the rolling breakers boom and blanch on the precipices,
Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a promontory.
So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous adversaries
Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with rapid unanimous hand,
Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless avarice,
Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter tremulously,
Then her pulses at the clamoring of her enemy faint'd away.

IN QUANTITY. — SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION.

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Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny buds.
Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudinous agonies.
Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a valorous legionary.
Fell the colony, city and citadel, London, Verulam, Camulodune.

IN QUANTITY.

MILTON.

Alcaics.

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'd inventor of harmonies,
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages;
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean
Rings to the roar of an angel onset —
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
And bloom profuse and cedar arches
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
Where some refulgent sunset of India
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
And crimson-hued the stately palmwoods
Whisper in odorous heights of even.

Hendecasyllabics.

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers.
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
All composed in a metre of Catullus,
All in quantity, careful of my motion,
Like the skater on ice that hardly bears him,
Lest I fall unawares before the people,
Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.
Should I flounder awhile without a tumble
Thro' this metrifcation of Catullus,
They should speak to me not without a welcome,
All that chorus of indolent reviewers.
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,
So fantastical is the dainty metre.
Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor believe me
Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.
O blatant Magazines, regard me rather —
Since I blush to belaud myself a moment —
As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost
Horticultural art, or half coquette-like
Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD
IN BLANK VERSE.

So Hector said, and sea-like roar'd his host;
Then loosed their sweating horses from the yoke
And each beside his chariot bound his own;
And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep
In haste they drove, and honey-hearted wine
And bread from out the houses brought, and heap'd
Their firewood, and the winds from off the plain

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION.

Roll'd the rich vapor far into the heaven.
 And these all night upon the * bridge of war
 Sat glorying ; many a fire before them blazed :
 As when in heaven the stars about the moon
 Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,
 And every height comes out, and jutting peak
 And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
 Break open to their highest, and all the stars
 Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his heart :
 So many a fire between the ships and stream
 Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy,
 A thousand on the plain ; and close by each
 Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire ;
 And champing golden grain, the horses stood
 Hard by their chariots, waiting for the dawn.†

* Or, ridge.

† Or more literally, —

And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds
 Stood by their cars, waiting the throated morn.

Iliad VIII. 542 - 561.

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THE HOLY GRAIL, AND OTHER POEMS.

Iliad VIII. 542-561.

THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,
Had one fair daughter, and none other child;
And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came
Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war
Eath upon other, wasted all the land;
And still from time to time the heathen host
Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was left.
And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,
Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
But man was less and less, till Arthur came.
For first Aurelius lived and fought and died,
And after him King Uther fought and died,
But either fail'd to make the kingdom one.
And thro' the puissance of his Table Round,
Drew all their petty principdoms under him,
Their king and head, and made a realm, and
reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was waste,
Thick with wet woods, and many a beast
therein,

And none or few to scare or chase the beast;
So that wild dog, and wolf and boar and bear
Came night and day, and rooted in the fields,
And wallow'd in the gardens of the king.
And ever and anon the wolf would steal
The children and devour, but now and then,
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce
teat

To human sucklings; and the children,
housed
In her foul den, there at their meat would
growl.

And mock their foster-mother on four feet,
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like
men,

Worse than the wolves. And King Leodo-
gran

Groan'd for the Roman legions here again,
And Cæsar's eagle: then his brother king,
Rience, assail'd him: last a heathen horde,
Reddening the sun with smoke and earth
with blood,

And on the spike that split the mother's
heart

Spitting the child, brake on him, till, amazed,
He knew not whither he should turn for aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur newly
crown'd,
Tho' not without an uproar made by those
Who cried, "He is not Uther's son"—the
king

Sent to him, saying, "Arise, and help us thou!
For here between the man and beast we die."

And Arthur yet had done no deed of arms,
But heard the call, and came: and Guinevere
Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass;
But since he neither wore on helm or shield
The golden symbol of his kinglyhood,
But rode a simple knight among his knights,
And many of these in richer arms than he,
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,
One among many, tho' his face was bare.
But Arthur, looking downward as he past,
Felt the light of her eyes into his life.
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and pitch'd
His tents beside the forest. And he drave
The heathen, and he slew the beast, and fell'd
The forest, and let in the sun, and made
Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight;
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts
Of those great Lords and Barons of his realm
Flash'd forth and into war: for most of these
Made head against him, crying, "Who is he
That he should rule us? who hath proven
him

King Uther's son? for lo! we look at him,
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor
voice,

Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.
This is the son of Gorlois, not the king;
This is the son of Anton, not the king."

And Arthur, passing thence to battle, felt
Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere;
And thinking as he rode, "Her father said

That there between the man and beast they die.

Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts
Up to my throne, and side by side with me?
What happiness to reign a lonely king,
Vext — O ye stars that shudder over me,
O earth that soundest hollow under me,
Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be
join'd

To her that is the fairest under heaven,
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,
And cannot will my will, nor work my work
Wholly, nor make myself in mine own realm
Victor and lord. But were I join'd with her,
Then might we live together as one life,
And reigning with one will in everything
Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
And power on this dead world to make it
live."

And Arthur from the field of battle sent
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new-made knights, to King Leodogran,
Saying, "If I in aught have served thee well,
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife."

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in heart
Debating — "How should I that am a king,
However much he help me at my need,
Give my one daughter saving to a king,
And a king's son?" — lifted his voice, and call'd
A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom
He trusted all things, and of him required
His counsel: "Knowest thou aught of Ar-
thur's birth?"

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and
said,

"Sir king, there be but two old men that
know:

And each is twice as old as I: and one
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served
King Uther thro' his magic art: and one
Is Merlin's master (so they call him) Bleya,
Who taught him magic: but the scholar ran
Before the master, and so far, that Bleya
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and wrote
All things and whatsoever Merlin did
In one great annal-book, where after-years
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth."

To whom the King Leodogran replied,
"O friend, had I been holpen half as well
By this King Arthur as by thee to-day,
Then beast and man had had their share of
me:

But summon here before us yet once more
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere."

Then, when they came before him, the
king said,

"I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser
fowl,

And reason in the chase: but wherefore now
Do these your lords stir up the heat of war,
Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye yourselves,
Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's son?"

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd, "Ay,"
Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,
spake —
For bold in heart and act and word was he,
Whenever slander breathed against the
king —

"Sir, there be many rumors on this head:
For there be those who hate him in their
hearts,

Call him baseborn, and since his ways are
sweet,
And theirs are bestial, hold him less than
man:

And there be those who deem him more than
man,
And dream he dropt from heaven: but my
belief

In all this matter — so ye care to learn —
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's time
The prince and warrior Gorlois, he that held
Tintagel castle by the Cornish sea,
Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne:
And daughters had she borne him, — one
whereof

Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent,
Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved
To Arthur, — but a son she had not borne.

And Uther cast upon her eyes of love:
But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,
So loathed the bright dishonor of his love,
That Gorlois and King Uther went to war:
And overthrown was Gorlois and slain.

Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged
Ygerne within Tintagel, where her men,
Seeing the mighty swarm about their walls,
Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in,
And there was none to call to but himself.
So, compass'd by the power of the king,
Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,
And with a shameful swiftness: afterward,
Not many moons, King Uther died him-
self

Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule
After him, lest the realm should go to wrack.
And that same night, the night of the new
year,

By reason of the bitterness and grief
That vext his mother, all before his time
Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born
Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate
To Merlin, to be holden far apart
Until his hour should come: because the
lords

Of that fierce day were as the lords of this,
Wild beasts, and surely would have torn the
child

Piecemeal among them, had they known: for
each

But sought to rule for his own self and hand,
And many hated Uther for the sake
Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took the child,
And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight
And ancient friend of Uther; and his wife
Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him
with her own;

And no man knew. And ever since the lords

astias answer'd, "Ay,"
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Have foughten like wild beasts among them-
 selves,
 So that the realm has gone to wrack : but
 now,

This year, when Merlin (for his hour had
 come)
 Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the hall,
 Proclaiming, 'Here is Uther's heir, your
 king,

A hundred voices cried, 'Away with him !
 No king of ours ! a son of Gorlois he,
 Or else the child of Anton, and no king,
 Or else baseborn.' Yet Merlin thro' his
 craft,

And while the people clamor'd for a king,
 Had Arthur crown'd ; but after, the great
 lords
 Banded, and so brake out in open war."

Then while the king debated with himself
 If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,
 Or born the son of Gorlois, after death,
 Or Uther's son, and born before his time,
 Or whether there were truth in anything,
 Said by these three, there came to Camelard,
 With Gawain and young Modred, her two
 sons,
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent ;
 Whom as he could, not as he would, the king
 Made feast for, saying, as they sat at meat,

"A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas —
 Ye come from Arthur's court : think ye this
 king —
 So few his knights, however brave they be —
 Hath body enow to beat his foemen down ?"

"O king," she cried, "and I will tell
 thee : few,
 Few, but all brave, all of one mind with him ;
 For I was near him when the savage yells
 Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur sat
 Crown'd on the dais, and his warriors cried,
 'Be thou the king, and we will work thy will
 Who love thee.' Then the king in low, deep
 tones,

And simple words of great authority,
 Bound them by so strait vows to his own self,
 That when they rose, knighted from kneel-
 ing, some

Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,
 Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one who
 wakes

Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

"But when he spake and cheer'd his Table
 Round

With large divine and comfortable words
 Beyond my tongue to tell thee — I beheld
 From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash
 A momentary likeness of the king !
 And ere it left their faces, thro' the cross
 And those around it and the Crucified,
 Down from the casement over Arthur, smote
 Flame-color, vert and azure, in three rays,
 One falling upon each of three fair queens,
 Who stood in silence near his throne, the
 friends

Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright
 Sweet faces, who will help him at his need.

"And there I saw mage Merlin, whose
 vast wit
 And hundred winters are but as the hands
 Of loyal vassals tolling for their liege.

"And near him stood the Lady of the
 Lake,
 Who knows a subtler magic than his own —
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.
 She gave the king his huge cross-hilted
 sword,

Whereby to drive the heathen out : a mist
 Of incense curl'd about her, and her face
 Wellnigh was hidden in the minster gloom ;
 But there was heard among the holy hymns
 A voice as of the waters, for she dwells
 Down in a deep, calm, whatsoever storms
 May shake the world, and when the surface
 rolls,

Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord.

"There likewise I beheld Excalibur
 Before him at his crowning borne, the sword
 That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
 And Arthur row'd across and took it — rich
 With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
 Bewildering heart and eye — the blade so
 bright

That men are blinded by it — on one side,
 Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
 'Take me,' but turn the blade and you shall
 see,

And written in the speech ye speak yourself,
 'Cast me away !' and sad was Arthur's face
 Taking it, but old Merlin counsel'd him,
 'Take thou and strike ! the time to cast
 away

Is yet far-off.' So this great brand the king
 Took, and by this will beat his foemen down."

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but thought
 To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,
 Fixing full eyes of question on her face,
 "The swallow and the swift are near akin,
 But thou art closer to this noble prince,
 Being his own dear sister" ; and she said,
 "Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am I" ;
 "And therefore Arthur's sister," asked the
 King.

She answer'd, "These be secret things,"
 and sign'd

To those two sons to pass and let them be.
 And Gawain went, and breaking into song
 Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair
 Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw :
 But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,
 And there half heard ; the same that after-
 ward
 Struck for the throne, and striking found his
 doom.

And then the Queen made answer, "What
 know I ?
 For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,
 And dark in hair and eyes am I ; and dark

Was Gorlo's, yea and dark was Uther too,
Wellnigh to blackness; but this king is fair
Beyond the race of Britons, and of men.
Moreover always in my mind I hear
A cry from out the dawning of my life,
A mother weeping, and I hear her say,
'O that ye had some brother, pretty one,
To guard thee on the rough ways of the
world.'

"Ay," said the King, "and hear ye such
a cry?
But when did Arthur chance upon thee first?"

"O king!" she cried, "and I will tell thee
true:

He found me first when yet a little maid:
Beaten I had been for a little fault
Whereof I was not guilty; and out I ran
And dung myself down on a bank of heath,
And hated this fair world and all therein,
And wept, and wish'd that I were dead; and
he—

I know not whether of himself he came,
Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can
walk

Unseen at pleasure—he was at my side,
And spake sweet words, and comforted my
heart,

And dried my tears, being a child with me.
And many a time he came, and evermore
As I grew greater grew with me; and
At times he seem'd, and sad with him
Stern too at times, and then I loved him
But sweet again, and then I loved him
And now of late I see him less and less,
But those first days had golden hours for
me,

For then I surely thought he would be king.

"But let me tell thee now another tale:
For Bley's, our Merlin's master, as they say,
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,
To hear him speak before he left his life.
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the mage,
And when I enter'd told me that himself
And Merlin ever served about the king,
Uther, before he died, and on the night
When Uther in Tintagel past away
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two
Left the still king, and passing forth to
breathe,

Then from the castle gateway by the chasm
Descending thro' the dismal night—a night
In which the bounds of heaven and earth
were lost—

Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape
thereof

A dragon wing'd, and all from stern to stern
Bright with a shining people on the decks,
And gone as soon as seen: and then the two
Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sea
fall,

Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame:

And down the wave and in the flame was
borne

A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,
Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried,
'The King!

Here is an heir for Uther!' and the fringe
Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,
Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,
And all at once all round him rose in fire,
So that the child and he were clothed in fire.
And presently thereafter follow'd calm,
Free sky and stars: 'And this same child,' he
said,

'Is he who reigns; nor could I part in peace
Th' this were told.' And saying this the seer
Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of
death,

Not ever to be question'd any more
Save on the further side; but when I met
Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were
truth—

The shining dragon and the naked child
Descending in the glory of the seas—
He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me
In riddling triplets of old time, and said:

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the
sky!

A young man will be wiser by and by;
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the
lea!

And truth is this to me, and that to thee;
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom
blows:

Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who
knows?

From the great deep to the great deep he
goes.

"So Merlin riddling anger'd me; but thou
Fear not to give this king thine only child,
Guinevere: so great bards of him will sing
Hereafter; and dark sayings from of old
Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of men,
And echo'd by old folk beside their fires
For comfort after their wage-work is done,
Speak of the king; and Merlin in our time
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn
Tho' men may wound him that he will not die,
But pass, again to come; and then or now
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,
Till these and all men hail him for their king."

She spake and King Leodogran rejoiced,
But musing "Shall I answer yea or nay?"
Doubted and drowsed, nodded and slept, and
saw,

Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,
Field after field, up to a height, the peak
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom king,
Now looming, and now lost; and on the slope
The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was
driven,
Fire glimpsed; and all the land from roof and
rick,

In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,

and in the flame was

de to Merlin's feet,
at the babe, and cried,

ther !' and the fringe
weeping up the strand,
as he spake the word,
and him rose in fire,
e were clothed in fire,
er follow'd calm,
ed this same child, 'he

could I part in peace
and saying this the seer
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side their fires
ge-work is done,
Merlin in our time
est, and sworn
that he will not die,
and then or now
underfoot,
him for their king."

dogran rejoiced,
er yea or nay?"
ted and slept, and

that ever grew,
ght, the peak
a phantom king,
and on the slope
all, the herd was

and from roof and

rolling wind,

Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with the
haze

And made it thicker ; while the phantom
king

Sent out at times a voice ; and here or there
Stood one who pointed toward the voice, the
rest

Slew on and burnt, crying, " No king of ours,
No son of Uther, and no king of ours " ;
I'll with a wink his dream was changed, the
haze

Descended, and the solid earth became
As nothing, and the king stood out in heaven,
Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent
Ullius, and Brastias and Bedivere,
Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.

Then Arthur charged warrior whom he
loved

And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to the
forth

And bring the Queen ; — and watch'd
from the gates :

and Lancelot past away among the flowers,
(For then was latter April) and return'd
Among the flowers, in May, with Guinevere.
To whom arrived, by Dubric the high saint,
Chief of the church in Britain, and before
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the king
That morn was married, while in stainless
white,

The fair beginners of a nobler time,
And glorying in their vows and him, his
knights

Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.
And holy Dubric spread his hands and spake,
" Reign ye, and live and love, and make the
world

Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee,
And all this Order of thy Table Round
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their king."

Then at the marriage feast came in from
Rome,

The slowly-fading mistress of the world,
Great lords, who claim'd the tribute as of
yore.

But Arthur spake, " Behold, for these have
sworn

To fight my wars, and worship me their king ;
The old order changeth, yielding place to
new ;

And we that fight for our fair father Christ,
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and old
To drive the heathen from your Roman wall,
No tribute will we pay" ; so those great
lords

Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove with
Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for a space
Were all one will, and thro' that strength the
king

Drew in the petty princedoms under him,
Fought, and in twelve great battles over-
came

The heathen hordes, and made a realm and
reign'd.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess
done

In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,
Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd The
Pure,

Had pass'd into the silent life of prayer,
Praise, fast, and alms ; and leaving for the
cowl

The helmet in an abbey far away
From Camelot, there, and not long a
died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the rest,
And honor'd him, and wrought into his heart
A way by love that waken'd love within,
To answer that which came : and as they sat
Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening half
The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke
Above them, ere the summer when he died,
The monk, Ambrosius question'd Percivale :

" O brother, I have seen this yew-tree
smoke,
Spring after spring, for half a hundred years :
For never have I known the world without,
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale : but thee,
When first thou camest — such a courtesy
Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice — I
knew

For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall ;
For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,
Some true, some light, but every one of you
Stamp'd with the image of the King ; and now
Tell me, what drove thee from the Table
Round,

My brother ? was it earthly passion crost ?"

" Nay," said the knight ; " for no such
passion mine.

But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail
Drove me from all vainglorious rivalries,
And earthly heats that spring and sparkle out
Among us in the jousts, while women watch
Who wins, who falls ; and waste the spiritual
strength

Within us, better offer'd up to Heaven."

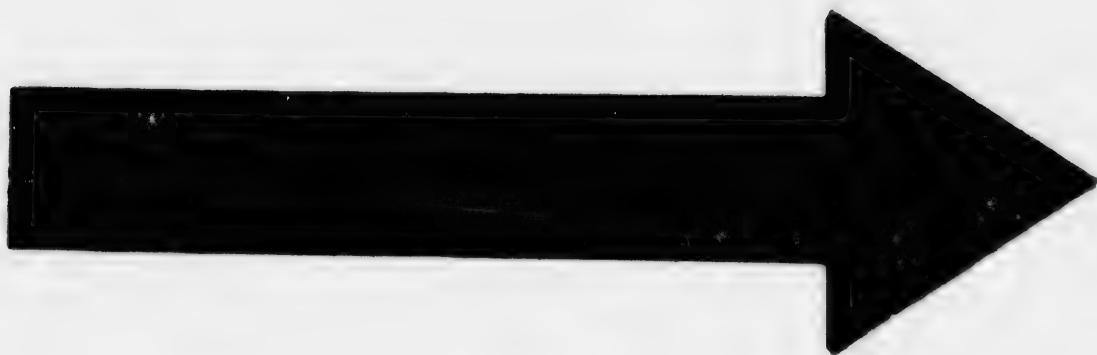
To whom the monk : " The Holy Grail ! —
I trust

We are green 'n Heaven's eyes ; but here too
much

We moulder — as to things without I mean —
Yet one of your own knights, a guest of ours,
Told us of this in our refectory,
But spake with such a sadness and so low
We heard not half of what he said. What is it?
The phantom of a cup that comes and goes ?"

" Nay, monk ! what phantom ?" answer'd
Percivale,

" The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his own.
This, from the blessed land of Aromat —
After the day of darkness, when the dead



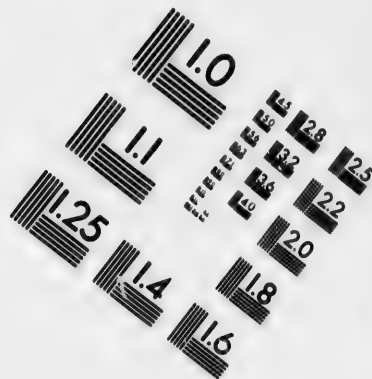
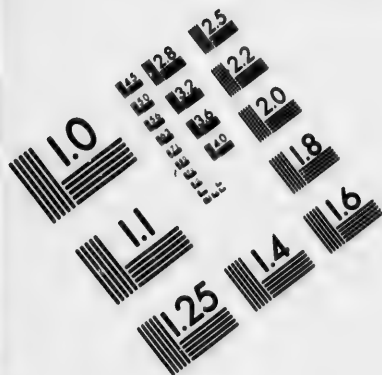
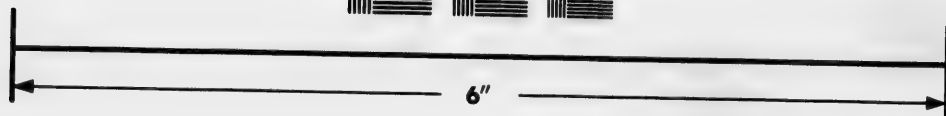
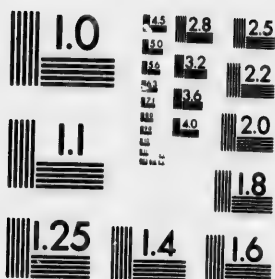


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Went wandering o'er Moriah—the good
gaint,

Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.
And there while it bode; and if a man
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at once,
By faith, of all his ills. But then the times
Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to Heaven, and disap-
pear'd."

To whom the monk: "From our old books
I know

That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury,
And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to build,
And there he built with wattles from the
marsh

A little lonely church in days of yore,
For so they say, these books of ours, but seem
Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.
But who first saw the holy thing to-day?"

"A woman," answer'd Percivale, "a nun,
And one no further off in blood from me
Than sister; and if ever holy maid
With knees of adoration wore the stone,
A holy maid; tho' never maiden glow'd,
But that was in her earlier maidenhood,
With such a fervent flame of human love,
Which being rudely blunted, glanced and shot
July to holy things: to prayer and praise
She gave herself, to fast and alms. And yet,
Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,
And the strange sound of an adulterous race,
Across the iron grating of her cell
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the more.

"And he to whom she told her sins, or what
Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,
A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,
A legend handed down thro' five or six,
And each of these a hundred winters old,
From our Lord's time. And when King Ar-
thur made

His Table Round, and all men's hearts be-
came

Clean for a season, surely he had thought
That now the Holy Grail would come again;
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would
come,

And heal the world of all their wickedness!
'O Father!' asked the maiden, 'might it
come

To me by prayer and fasting?' 'Nay,' said
he,

'I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow.'
And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I
thought

She might have risen and floated when I saw
her.

"For on a day she sent to speak with me.
And when she came to speak, beheld her eyes

Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,
Beautiful in the light of holiness.

And 'O my brother, Percivale,' she said,
'Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail;
For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound
As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
Blown, and I thought, "It is not Arthur's use
To hunt by moonlight"; and the slender
sound

As from a distance beyond distance grew
Coming upon me—O never harp nor horn,
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch
with hand,

Was like that music as it came; and then
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver
beam,

And down the long beam stole the Holy
Grail,

Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed
With rosy colors leaping on the wall;
And then the music faded, and the Grail
Pass'd, and the beam decay'd, and from the
walls

The rosy quiverings died into the night.
So now the Holy Thing is here again
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,
And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,
That so perchance the vision may be seen
By thee and those, and all the world be
heal'd.'

"Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this
To all men; and myself fasted and pray'd
Always, and many among us many a week
Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

"And one there was among us, ever moved
Among us in white armor, Galahad.

'God make thee good as thou art beautiful,'
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight;
and none,

In so young youth, was ever made a knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he
heard

My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;
His eyes became so like her own, they
seem'd

Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

"Sister or brother none had he; but some
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some said
Begotten by enchantment—chatterers they,
Like birds of passage piping up and down,
That gape for flies—we know not whence
they come;

For when was Lancelot wand'ringly lewd?

"But she, the wan sweet maiden shore
away

Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair
Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;
And out of this she plaited broad and long
A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver
thread

And crimson in the belt a strange device,

ing of them, beautiful,
ing of them, wonderful,
ght of holiness,
er, Percivale," she said,
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nor, Galahad.

as thou art beautiful,
dubb'd him knight;

ever made a knight
s Galahad, when he

me with amaze;
like her own, they

rother more than I.

he had he; but some
celot, and some said
— chattering they,
oing up and down,
know not whence

wanderingly lewd?

sweet maiden shore

l that wealth of hair
— work for her feet;
d broad and long
wove with silver

strange device,

A crimson grail within a silver beam:
And saw the bright, boy-knight, and bound
it on him.

Saying, 'My knight, my love, my knight of
heaven,

O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my
belt.

Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
And break thro' all, till one will crown thee
king

Far in the spiritual city': and as she spake
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her
mind

On him, and he believed in her belief

"Then came a year of miracle: O brother,
In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
And carven with strange figures; and in and
out

The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
And Merlin call'd it 'The Siege perilous,'
Perilous for good and ill: 'for there,' he said,
'No man could sit but he should lose him-
self':

And once by misadventure Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,
Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
Cried, 'If I lose myself I save myself!'

"Then on a summer night it came to pass,
While the great banquet lay along the hall,
That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's
chair.

"And all at once, as there we sat, we heard
A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and overhead
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.
And in the blast there snote along the hall
A beam of light seven times more clear than
day:

And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail
All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,
And none might see who bore it, and it past.
But every knight beheld his fellow's face
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
And staring each at other like dumb men
Stood, till I found a voice and sware a vow.

"I sware a vow before them all, that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
Until I found and saw it, as the nun
Mysister saw it; and Galahad sware the vow,
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin,
swore,
And Lancelot sware, and many among the
knights,
And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest."

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, asking
him,
'What said the king? Did Arthur take the
vow?'

"Nay, for my lord," said Percivale, "the
King

Was not in hall: for early that same day,
'Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit hold,
An outraged maiden sprang into the hall
Crying on help: for all her shining hair
Was smear'd with earth, and either milky
arm

Red-vent with hooks of bramble, and all she
wore

Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn
In tempest: so the King arose and went
To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild
bees

That made such honey in his realm. Howbeit
Some little of this marvel he too saw,
Returning o'er the plain that then began
To darken under Camelot: whence the King
Look'd up, calling aloud, 'Lo there! the
roofs

Of our great Hall are rolled in thunder-
smoke!
Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by the
bolt.'

For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,
As having there so oft with all his knights
Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

"O brother, had you known our mighty
hall,

Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing
brook,

Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.
And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt
With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall:
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
And on the fourth are men with growing
wings,

And over all one statue in the mould
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,
And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern
Star.

And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown
And both the wings are made of gold, and
flame

At sunrise till the people in far fields,
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
Behold it, crying, 'We have still a king.'

"And, brother, had you known our hall
within,

Broader and higher than any in all the lands!
Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's
wars,

And all the light that falls upon the board
Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our
King.

Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and
mere,

Where Arthur finds the brand, Excalibur.
And also one to the west, and counter to it,

And blank : and who shall blazon it? when
and how? —

O there, perchance, when all our wars are
done,

The brand Excalibur will be cast away.

"So to this hall full quickly rode the King,
In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,

Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish,
wraopt

In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.

And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw
The golden dragon sparkling over all :

And many of those who burnt the hold, their
arms

Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with
smoke, and sear'd,

Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,
Full of the vision, prest : and then the King

Spake to me, being nearest, 'Percivale,
(Because the hall was all in tumult — some

Vowing, and some protesting,) 'what is this?'

"O brother, when I told him what had
chanced,

My sister's vision, and the rest, his face
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than once,

When some brave deed seem'd to be done in
vain,

Darken : and 'Woe is me, my knights !' he
cried,

'Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow.'
Bold was mine answer, 'Had thyself been

here,

My King, thou wouldst have sworn.' 'Yea,
yea,' said he,

'Art thou so bold and hast not seen the
Grail?'

"Nay, Lord, I heard the sound, I saw
the light,

But since I did not see the Holy Thing,
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw.'

"Then when he asked us, knight by knight,
if any

Had seen it, all their answers were as one :

'Nay, Lord, and therefore have we sworn
our vows.'

"Lo now," said Arthur, 'have ye seen a
cloud?

What go ye into the wilderness to see?'

"Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a
voice

Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,
'But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,'

I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry —
O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me.'

"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the King,
for such

As thou art is the vision, not for these.
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign —

Holier is none, my Percivale, than she —
A sign to main this Order which I made,

But you, that follow but the leader's bell,

(Brother, the king was hard upon his knights,)
'Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,

And one hath sung and all the dumb will sing.
Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne

Five knights at once, and every younger
knight,

Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,
Till overborne by one, he learns — and ye,

What are ye? Galahads! — no, nor Perci-
vales'

(For thus it pleased the King to range me
close

After Sir Galahad) : 'nay,' said he, 'but men
With strength and will to right the wrong'd,

of power

To lay the sudden heads of violence flat,
Knights that in twelve great battles splash'd

and dyed

The strong White Horse in his own heathen
blood —

But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.
Go, since your vows are sacred, being made :

Yet — for ye know the cries of all my realm,
Pass thro' this hall — how often, O my knights,

Your places being vacant at my side,
This chance of noble deeds will come and go

Unchallenged, while you follow wandering
fires

Lost in the quagmire? many of you, yea most,
Return no more : ye think I show myself

Too dark a prophet : come now, let us meet
The morrow morn once more in one full

field

Of gracious pastime, that once more the king,
Before you leave him for this Quest, may

count

The yet-unbroken strength of all his knights,
Rejoicing in that Order which I made.'

"So when the sun broke from under-
ground,

All the great table of our Arthur closed
And clash'd in such a tourney and so full,

So many lances broken — never yet
Had Camelot seen the like, since Arthur came ;

And I myself and Galahad, for a strength
Was in us from the vision, overthrew

So many knights that all the people cried,
And almost burst the barriers in their heat,

Shouting 'Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale !'

"But when the next day brake from under-
ground —

O brother, had you known our Camelot,
Built by old kings, age after age, so old

The king himself had fears that it would fall,
So strange, and rich, and dim ; for where the

roofs

Totter'd toward each other in the sky,
Met foreheads all along the street of those

Who watch'd us pass ; and lower, and where
the long

Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the necks
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,

Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of
flowers

Fell as we past ; and men and boys astride
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,

was hard upon his knights,
 fullest throat of song,
 and all the dumb will sing
 lot, and hath overborne
 once, and every younger

himself as Lancelot,
 one, he learns — and ye,
 ahads! — no, nor Perci-

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under, showers of

and boys astride
 rfin, swan,

At all the corners, named us each by name,
 Calling ' God speed ! ' but in the street below
 The knights and ladies wept, and rich and
 poor

Wept, and the King himself could hardly
 speak

For grief, and in the middle street the
 Queen,

Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd
 aloud,

' This madness has come on us for our sins.'
 And then we reach'd the weirdly sculptured

gate,
 Where Arthur's wars were reader'd mysti-

cally,
 And thence departed every one his way.

" And I was lifted up in heart, and thought
 Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,

How my strong lance had beaten down the
 knights,

So many and famous names; and never yet
 Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth so

green,
 For all my blood danced in me, and I knew

That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

" Thereafter, the dark warning of our King,
 That most of us would follow wandering fires,

Came like a driving gloom across my mind.
 Then every evil word I had spoken once,

And every evil thought I had thought of old,
 And every evil deed I ever did,

Awoke and cried, ' This Quest is not for thee.'
 And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself

Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,
 And I was thirsty even unto death;

And I, too, cried, ' This Quest is not for thee.'

" And on I rode, and when I thought my
 thirst

Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a
 brook,

With one sharp rapid, where the crisping
 white

Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave,
 And took both ear and eye; and o'er the

brook
 Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook

Fallen, and on the lawns, ' I will rest here,'
 I said, ' I am not worthy of the Quest';

But even while I drank the brook, and ate
 The goodly apples, all these things at once

Fell into dust, and I was left alone,
 And thirsting, in a land of sand and thorns.

" And then beheld a woman at a door
 Spinning; and fair the house whereby she sat,

And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,
 And all her bearing gracious; and she rose

Opening her arms to meet me, as who should
 say,

' Rest here'; but when I touched her, lo!
 she, too,

Fell into dust and nothing, and the house
 Became no better than a broken shed,

And in it a dead babe; and also this
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

" And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.
 Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the world,
 And where it smote the ploughshare in the
 field,

The ploughman left his ploughing, and fell
 down

Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail,
 The milkmaid left her milking, and fell down

Before it, and I knew not why, but thought
 ' The sun is rising, ' tho' the sun had risen.

Then was I ware of one that on me moved
 In golden armor with a crown of gold

About a casque all jewels; and his horse
 In golden armor jewell'd everywhere;

And on the splendor came, flashing me blind;
 And seem'd to me the Lord of all the world,

Being so huge. But when I thought he meant
 To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,

Opened his arms to embrace me as he came,
 And up I went and touch'd him, and he, too,

Fell into dust, and I was left alone
 And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

" And I rode on and found a mighty hill,
 And on the top, a city wall'd; the spires

Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.
 And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and

these
 Cried to me climbing, ' Welcome, Percivale!

Thou mightiest and thou purest among men!'
 And glad was I and clomb, but found at top

No man, nor any voice. And thence I past
 Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw

That man had once dwelt there; but there
 I found

Only one man of an exceeding age.
 ' Where is that goodly company,' said I,

' That so cried out upon me?' and he had
 Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasp'd

' Whence and what art thou?' and even as he
 spoke

Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and I
 Was left alone once more, and cried in grief,

' Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
 And touch it, it will crumble into dust.'

" And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,
 Low as the hill was high, and where the vale

Was lowest, found a chapel and thereby
 A holy hermit in a hermitage,

To whom I told my phantoms, and he said:

" O son, thou hast not true humility,
 The highest virtue, mother of them all;

For when the Lord of all things made Him-
 self

Naked of glory for His mortal change,
 " Take thou my robe," she said, " for all is

thine."

And all her form shone forth with sudden
 light

So that the angels were amazed, and she
 Follow'd him down, and like a flying star

Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the east;
 But her thou hast not known: for what is this

Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy sins?
 Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself

As Galahad.' When the hermit made an end,

In silver armor suddenly Galahad shone
Before us, and against the chapel door
Laid lance, and enter'd, and we knelt in
prayer.

And there the hermit slaked my burning
thirst

And at the sacring of the mass I saw
The holy elements alone ; but he :

'Saw ye no more ? I, Galahad, saw the Grail,

The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine :

I saw the fiery face as of a child

That smote itself into the bread, and went ;

And hither am I come ; and never yet

Hath what thy sister taught me first to see,

'This Holy Thing, fail'd from my side, nor

come

Cover'd, but moving with me night and day,

Fainter by day, but always in the night

Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd

marsh

Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top

Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below

Blood-red. And in the strength of this I rode,

Shattering all evil customs everywhere,

And past thro' Pagan realms, and made them

mine,

And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore

them down,

And broke thro' all, and in the strength of this

Come victor. But my time is hard at hand,

And hence I go ; and one will crown me king

Far in the spiritual city ; and come thou, too,

For thou shalt see the vision when I go.'

"While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling

on mine,

Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew

One with him, to believe as he believed. .

Then, when the day began to wane, we went.

"There rose a hill that none but man could

climb,

Scarr'd with a hundred wintry watercourses—

Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it,

storm

Round us and death ; for every moment

glanced

His silver arms and gloom'd : so quick and

thick

The lightnings here and there to left and

right

Struck, till the dry old trunks about us, dead,

Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,

Sprang into fire : and at the base we found

On either hand, as far as eye could see,

A great black swamp and of an evil smell,

Part black, part whiten'd with the bones of

men,

Not to be crost, save that some ancient king

Had built a way, where, link'd with many a

bridge,

A thousand piers ran into the great Sea.

And Galahad fled along them bridge by

bridge,

And every bridge as quickly as he crost

Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I yearn'd

To follow ; and thrice above him all the heav-

ens

Open'd and blazed with thunder such as
seem'd

Shoutings of all the sons of God ; and first

At once I saw him far on the great Sea,

In silver-shining armor starry-clear ;

And o'er his head the holy vessel hung

Clothed in white samite or a lumenous cloud.

And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat

If boat it were — I saw not whence it came.

And when the heavens open'd and blazed

again

Roaring, I saw him like a silver star —

And had he set the sail, or had the boat

Become a living creature clad with wings ?

And o'er his head the holy vessel hung

Redder than any rose, a joy to me,

For now I knew the veil had been withdrawn.

Then in a moment when they blazed again

Opening, I saw the least of little stars

Down on the waste, and straight beyond the

star

I saw the spiritual city and all her spires

And gateways in a glory like one pearl —

No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints —

Strike from the sea ; and from the star there

shot

A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there

Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,

Which never eyes on earth again shall see.

Then fell the floods of heaven drowning the

deep.

And how my feet recross'd the deathful ridge

No memory in me lives ; but that I touch'd

The chapel-doors at dawn I know ; and

thence

Taking my war-horse from the holy man,

Glad that no phantom vex't me more, return'd

To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's

wars."

"O brother," ask'd Ambrosius, — "for in

sooth

These ancient books — and they would win

thee — teem,

Only I find not there this Holy Grail,

With miracles and marvels like to these,

Not all unlike ; which oftentime I read,

Who read but on my breviary with ease,

Till my head swims ; and then go forth and

pass

Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,

And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest

To these old walls — and mingle with our

folk ;

And knowing every honest face of theirs,

As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,

And every homely secret in their hearts,

Delight myself with gossip and old wives,

And ill and aches, and teetings, lyings-in,

And mirthful sayings, children of the place,

That have no meaning half a league away :

Or lulling random squabbles when they rise,

Chaffering and chattering at the market-

cross,

Rejoice, small man, in this small world of

mine,

Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs, —

O brother, saving this Sir Galahad

Came ye on none but phantoms in your quest,
No man, no woman?"

Then, Sir Percivale :
"All men, to one so bound by such a vow,
And women were as phantoms. O my
brother,

Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee
How far I falter'd from my quest and vow?
For after I had lain so many nights
A bedmate of the snail and eft and snake,
In grass and burdock, I was changed to wan
And meagre, and the vision had not come,
And then I chanced upon a goodly town
With one great dwelling in the middle of it;
Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd
By maidens each as fair as any flower:
But when they led me into hall, behold
The Princess of that castle was the one,
Brother, and that one only, who had ever
Made my heart leap; for when I moved of old
A slender page about her father's hall,
And she a slender maiden, all my heart
Went after hers with longing: yet we twain
Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a vow.
And now I came upon her once again,
And one had wedded her, and he was dead,
And all his land and wealth and state were
hers.

And while I tarried, every day she set
A banquet richer than the day before
By me; for all her longing and her will
Was toward me as of old; till one fair morn,
That flash'd across her orchard underneath
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,
And calling me the greatest of all knights,
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first time,
And gave herself and all her wealth to me.
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning word,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,
And the Quest faded in my heart. Anon,
The heads of all her people drew to me,
With supplication both of knees and tongue.
'We have heard of thee: thou art our great-
est knight:

Our Lady says it, and we well believe:
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land.'
O me, my brother! but one night my vow
Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own
self.

And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but her;
Then after I was join'd with Galahad
Cared not for her, nor anything upon earth."

Then said the monk, "Poor men, when
yule is cold,
Must be content to sit by little fires.
And this am I, so that ye care for me
Ever so little: yea, and blest be Heaven
That brought thee here to this poor house of
ours.

Where all the brethren are so hard, to warm
My cold heart with a friend: but O the pity
To find thine own first love once more — to
hold,

Hold her a wealthy bride within thine arms,
Or all but hold, and then — cast her aside,
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed.
For we that want the warmth of double life,
We that are plagued with dreams of some-
thing sweet

Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich,—
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthlywise,
Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,
But live like an old badger in his earth,
With earth about him everywhere, despite
All fast and penance. Saw ye none beside,
None of your knights?"

"Yea so," said Percivale:
"One night my pathway swerving east, I saw
The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors
All in the middle of the rising moon:
And toward him spur'd and hail'd him, and
he me,
And each made joy of either; then he ask'd,
'Where is he? hast thou seen him — Lance-
lot? Once.'
Said good Sir Bors, 'he dash'd across me —
mad,
And maddening what he rode: and when I
cried,

"Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest
So holy?" Lancelot shouted, "Stay me not!
I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,
For now there is a lion in the way."
So vanish'd."

"Then Sir Bors had ridden on
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,
Because his former madness, once the talk
And scandal of our table, had return'd;
For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship him
That ill to him is ill to them; to Bors
Beyond the rest: he well had been content
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have
seen,
The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,
Being so clouded with his grief and love,
Small heart was his after the Holy Quest:
If God would send the vision, well; if not,
The Quest and he were in the hands of
Heaven.

"And then, with small adventure met, Sir
Bors
Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,
And found a people there among their crags,
Our race and blood, a remnant that were left
Paynim amid their circles, and the stones
They pitch up straight to heaven: and their
wise men

Were strong in that old magic which can
trace
The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at
him,
And this high Quest as at a simple thing:
Told him he follow'd — almost Arthur's
words —

A mocking fire: 'what other fire than he,
Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom
blows,
And the sea rolls, and all the world is warm'd?"

And when his answer chafed them, the rough
 crowd,
 Hearing he had a difference with their
 priests,
 Seized him, and bound and plunged him into
 a cell
 Of great piled stones; and lying bounden
 there
 In darkness thro' innumerable hours
 He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep
 Over him, till by miracle — what else?
 Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell,
 Such as no wind could move: and thro' the
 gap
 Glimmer'd the streaming scud: then came
 a night
 Still as the day was loud; and thro' the gap
 The seven clear stars of Arthur's 'Table
 Round —
 For, brother, so one night, because they roll
 Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the
 stars,
 Rejoicing in ourselves and in our king —
 And these, like bright eyes of familiar friends,
 In on him shone, 'And then to me, to me,'
 Said good Sir Bors, 'beyond all hopes of
 mine,
 Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for my-
 self —
 Across the seven clear stars — O grace to
 me —
 In color like the fingers of a hand
 Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail
 Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd
 A sharp quick thunder.' Afterwards a maid,
 Who kept our holy faith among her kin
 In secret, entering loosed and let him go."

To whom the monk: "And I remember
 now
 That pelican on the casque: Sir Bors it was
 Who spake so low and sadly at our board;
 And mighty reverent at our grace was he:
 A square-set man and honest; and his eyes,
 An out-door sign of all the warmth within,
 Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath a
 cloud,
 But Heaven had meant it for a sunny one:
 Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But when ye
 reach'd
 The city, found ye all your knights return'd,
 Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,
 Tell me, and what said each, and what the
 King?"

Then answer'd Percivale: "And that
 can I,
 Brother, and truly: since the living words
 Of so great men as Lancelot and our King
 Pass not from door to door and out again,
 But sit within the house. O, when we reach'd
 The city, our horses stumbling as they trode
 On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
 Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cockatrices,
 And shatter'd talbots, which had left the
 stones
 Raw, that they fell from, brought us to the
 hall.

"And there sat Arthur on the dais-throne,
 And those that had gone out upon the
 Quest,
 Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them,
 And those that had not, stood before the
 King.
 Who, when he saw me, rose, and bade me
 hail,
 Saying, 'A welfare in thine eye reproves
 Our fear of some disastrous chance for thee
 On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding ford.
 So fierce a gale made havoc here of late
 Among the strange devices of our kings;
 Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of ours,
 And from the statue Merlin moulded for us
 Half wrench'd a golden wing; but now —
 the quest.
 This vision — hast thou seen the Holy Cup,
 That Joseph brought of old to Glastonbury?'"

"So when I told him all thyself hast heard,
 Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve
 To pass away into the quiet life,
 He answer'd not, but, sharply turning, ask'd
 Of Gawain, 'Gawain, was this Quest for thee?'"

"'Nay, lord,' said Gawain, 'not for such
 as I.
 Therefore I communed with a saintly man,
 Who made me sure the Quest was not for me.
 For I was much awaried of the Quest;
 But found a silk pavilion in a field,
 And merry maidens in it; and then this gale
 Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,
 And blew my merry maidens all about
 With all discomfort; yea, and but for this,
 My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant to
 me.'

"He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to whom
 at first
 He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering, push'd
 Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught his
 hand,
 Held it, and there, half hidden by him, stood.
 Until the King espied him, saying to him,
 'Hail, Bors! if ever royal man and true
 Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail'; and
 Bors,
 'Ask me not, for I may not speak of it,
 I saw it': and the tears were in his eyes —

"Then there remain'd but Lancelot, for
 the rest
 Spake but of sundry perils in the storm;
 Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,
 Our Arthur kept his best until the last.
 'Thou, too, my Lancelot,' ask'd the King,
 'my friend,
 Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail'd for
 thee?'"

"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lancelot,
 with a groan;
 'O King!' — and when he paused, me-
 thought I spied
 A dying fire of madness in his eyes, —
 'O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be

Arthur on the dais-throne,
had gone out upon the

and but a tithe of them,
and not, stood before the

v me, rose, and bade me

in thine eye reproves
sastrous chance for thee
sea, or flooding ford.
de havoc here of late
devices of our kings;
wer, stronger hall of ours,
Merlin moulded for us
golden wing; but now—

hou seen the Holy Cup,
t of Glastonbury?

im all thyself hast heard,
fresh but fixt resolve
e quiet life,
sharply turning, ask'd
was this Questforth?

Gawain, 'not for such

ed with a saintly man,
e Quest was not for me.
ried of the Quest;
lion in a field,

it; and then this gale
in the tenting-pin,
maiden all about
yea, and but for this,
a day were pleasant to

Arthur turn'd to whom

s, on entering, push'd
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hidden by him, stood.
him, saying to him,
al man and true
seen the Grail'; and

not speak of it,
were in his eyes—

d but Lancelot, for

Is in the storm;
a in Holy Writ,
until the last,
t, ask'd the King.

Quest avail'd for

answer'd Lancelot,

he paused, me-

his eyes,—
nd of thine I be

Happier are those that welter in their sin,
Swim in the mud, that cannot see for slime,
Slime of the ditch: but in me lived a sin
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
Round that one sin, until the wholesome
flower

And poisonous grew together, each as each,
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when thy
knights

Sware, I sware with them only in the hope
That could I touch or see the Holy Grail
They might be pluck'd asunder: then I spake
To one most holy saint, who wept and said,
That save they could be pluck'd asunder, all
My quest were but in vain; to whom I vow'd
That I wou'd work according as he will'd.
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd and
strove

To tear the twain asunder in my heart,
My madhness came upon me as of old,
And whipt me into waste fields far away;
There was I beaten down by little men,
Mean knights, to whom the moving of my
sword

And shadow of my spear had been enow
To scare them from me once; and then I
came

All in my folly to the naked shore,
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse grasses
grew

But such a blast, my King, began to blow,
So loud a blast along the shore and sea,
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,
'Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea
Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens
Were shaken with the motion and the sound.
And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a
boat.

Half swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a chain;
And in my madness to myself I said,
"I will embark and I will lose myself,
And in the great sea wash away my sin."
I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.
Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,
And with me drove the moon and all the
stars;

And the wind fell, and on the seventh night
I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,
And felt the boat shock earth, and looking up,
Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,
A castle like a rock upon a rock,
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,
And steps that met the breaker! there was
none

Stood near it but a lion on each side
That kept the entry, and the moon was full.
Then from the boat I leapt, and up the stairs.
There drew my sword. With sudden-flaring
manes

Those two great beasts rose upright like a
man,
Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between;
And, when I would have smitten them, heard
a voice,
"Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the
beasts

Will tear thee piecemeal"; then with violence
The sword was dash'd from out my hand,
and fell.

And up into the sounding hall I past;
But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,
No bench nor table, painting on the wall
Or shield of knight; only the rounded moon
Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
But always in the quiet house I heard,
Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,
A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower
To the eastward: up I climb'd a thousand
steps

With pain: as in a dream I seem'd to climb
Forever: at the last I reach'd a door,
A light was in the crannies, and I heard,
"Glory and joy and honor to our Lord
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail."

Then in my madness I essay'd the door;
It gave, and thro' a stormy glare, a heat
As from a seventimes-heated furnace, I,
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd away—
O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
All pall'd in crimson samite, and around
'Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and
eyes.

And but for all my madness and my sin,
And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw
That which I saw; but what I saw was veil'd
And cover'd; and this quest was not for me.'

"So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot
left

The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—nay,
Brother, I need not tell thee foolish words,—
A reckless and irreverent knight was he,
Now bolden'd by the silence of his King.
Well, I will tell thee: 'O king, my liege,' he
said,

'Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?
When have I stinted stroke in foughten field?
But as for thine, my good friend, Percivale,
Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad,
Yea, made our mightiest madder than our
least.

But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,
I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,
And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,
To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
Henceforward.'

"'Deafer,' said the blameless King,
'Gawain, and blinder unto holy things
Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,
Being too blind to have desire to see.
But if indeed there came a sign from heaven,
Blessed are Bors, Lancelot, and Percivale,
For these have seen according to their sight.
For every fiery prophet in old times,
And all the sacred madness of the bard,
When God made music thro' them, could
but speak

His music by the framework and the chord;
And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

"'Nay—but thou erreest, Lancelot: never
yet

Could all of true and noble in knight and man
Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,
With such a closeness, but apart there grew,
Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,
Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness;
Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.

"And spake I not too truly, O my knights?

Was I too dark a prophet when I said
To those who went upon the Holy Quest,
That most of them would follow wandering
fires,

Lost in the quagmire? — lost to me and gone,
And left me gazing at a barren board,
And a lean Order — scarce return'd a tithe —
And out of those to whom the vision came
My greatest hardly will believe he saw;
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And leaving human wrongs to right them-
selves,

"Cares but to pass into the silent life.

And one hath had the vision face to face,
And now his chair desires him here in vain,
However they may crown him elsewhere.

"And some among you held, that if the King

Had seen the sight he would have sworn the
vow:

Not easily, seeing that the King must guard
That which he rules, and is but as the hind,
To whom a space of land is given to plough,
Who may not wander from the allotted field,
Before his work be done; but, being done,
Let visions of the night or of the day
Come, as they will; and many a time they
come,

Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is notlight,
This air that smites his forehead is not air
But vision — yea, his very hands and feet —
In moments when he feels he cannot die,
And knows himself no vision to himself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
Who rose again: ye have seen what ye have
seen.

"So spake the king: I knew not all he
meant."

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.

KING ARTHUR made new knights to fill the
gap

Left by the Holy Quest; and as he sat
In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors
Were softly sunder'd, and thro' those a youth,
Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the fields
Past, and the sunshine came along with him.

"Make me thy knight, because I know,
Sir King,

All that belongs to knighthood, and I love,"
Such was his cry; for having heard the King
Had let proclaim a tournament — the prize
A golden circlet and a knightly sword.

Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won
The golden circlet, for himself the sword:
And there were those who knew him near
the King
And promised for him: and Arthur made
him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of the
isles —

But lately come to his inheritance,
And lord of many a barren isle was he —
Kiding at noon, a day or twain before,
Across the forest call'd of Dean, to find
Caerleon and the King, had felt the sun
Beat like a strong knight on his helm, and
reel'd

Almost to falling from his horse; but saw
Near him a mound of even-sloping side,
Whereon a hundred stately beeches grew,
And here and there great hollies under them.
But for a mile all round was open space,
And fern and heath: and slowly Pelleas drew
To that dim day, then binding his good horse
To a tree, cast himself down; and as he lay
At random looking over the brown earth
Thro' that green-glooming twilight of the
grove,

It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern without
Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,
So that his eyes were dazzled looking at it.
Then o'er it crost the dimness of a cloud
Floating, and once the shadow of a bird
Flying, and then a fawn; and his eyes closed.
And since he loved all maidens, but no maid
In special, half awake he whisper'd, "Where?
O where? I love thee, tho' I know thee not.
For fair thou art and pure as Guinevere,
And I will make thee with my spear and
sword

As famous — O my queen, my Guinevere,
For I will be thine Arthur when we meet."

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of talk
And laughter at the limit of the wood,
And glancing thro' the hoary boles, he saw,
Strange as to some old prophet might have
seem'd

A vision hovering on a sea of fire,
Damsels in divers colors like the cloud
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them
On horses, and the horses richly trapt
Breast-high in that bright line of bracken
stood:

And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,
And one was pointing this way, and one that,
Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,
And loosed his horse, and led him to the light.
There she that seem'd the chief among them
said,

"In happy time behold our pilot-star!
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we ride,
Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the knights
There at Caerleon, but have lost our way:
To right? to left? straight forward? back
again?

Which? tell us quickly."

as for his lady won
for himself the sword :
ose who knew him near

him : and Arthur made

ight, Sir Pelleas of the

his inheritance,
barren isle was he —
y or twain before,
f'd of Dean, to find
ng, had felt the sun
night on his helm, and

m his horse ; but saw
of even-sloping side,
stately beeches grew,
reat hollies under them.
and was open space,
and slowly Pelleas drew
binding his good horse
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against the knights
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And Pelleas gazing thought,
" Is Guinevere herself so beautiful ?
For large her violet eyes look'd, and her
bloom

A rosy dawn kindled in stainless heavens,
And round her limbs, mature in womanhood,
And slender was her hand and small her
shape,

And but for those large eyes, the haunts of
scorn,
She might have seem'd a toy to trifle with,
And pass and care no more. But while he
gazed

The beauty of her flesh abash'd the boy,
As tho' it were the beauty of her soul :
For as the base man, judging of the good,
Puts his own baseness in him by default
Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend
All the young beauty of his own soul to hers,
Believing her ; and when she spake to him,
Stammer'd, and could not make her a reply.
For out of the waste islands had he come,
Where saving his own sisters he had known
Scarce any but the women of his isles,
Rough wives, that laugh'd and scream'd
against the gulls,
Makers of nets, and living from the sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the lady
round
And look'd upon her people ; and as when
A stone is flung into some sleeping tarn,
The circle widens till it lip the marge,
Spread the slow smile thro' all her company.
Three knights were thereamong ; and they
too smiled,
Scorning him ; for the lady was Ettarre,
And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said, " O wild and of the woods,
Knowest thou not the fashion of our speech ?
Or have the Heavens but given thee a fair face,
Lacking a tongue ? "

" O damsel," answer'd he,
" I woke from dreams ; and coming out of
gloom
Was dazzled by the sudden light, and crave
Pardon : but will ye to Caerleon ? I
Go likewise : shall I lead you to the King ? "

" Lead then," she said ; and thro' the
woods they went.
And while they rode, the meaning in his eyes,
His tenderness of manner, and chaste awe,
His broken utterances and bashfulness,
Were all a burden to her, and in her heart
She mutter'd, " I have lighted on a fool,
Raw, yet so stale ! " but since her mind was
bent
On hearing, after trumpet blown, her name
And title, " Queen of Beauty," in the lists
Cried — and beholding him so strong, she
thought
That peradventure he will fight for me,
And win the circlet : therefore flatter'd him,
Being so gracious, that he wellnigh deem'd
His wish by hers was echo'd ; and her knights

And all her damsels too were gracious to him,
For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd
Caerleon, ere they past to lodging, she,
Taking his hand, " O the strong hand," she
said,
" See ! look at mine ! but wilt thou fight for
me,
And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,
That I may love thee ? "

Then his helpless heart
Leapt, and he cried, " Ay ! wilt thou if I
win ? "
" Ay, that will I," she answer'd, and she
laugh'd,
And straightly nipt the hand, and flung it from
her :
Then glanced askew at those three knights of
hers,
Till all her ladies laugh'd along with her.

" O happy world," thought Pelleas, " all,
meseems,
Are happy : I the happiest of them all."
Nor slept that night for pleasure in his blood,
And green wood-ways and eyes among the
leaves ;
Then being on the morrow knighted, sware
To love one only ; and as he came away,
The men who met him rounded on their heels
And wonder'd after him, because his face
Shone like the countenance of a priest of old
Against the flame about a sacrifice
Kindled by fire from heaven : so glad was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets, and
strange knights
From the four winds came in : and each one
sat,
Tho' served with choice from air, land,
stream, and sea.
Of in mid-banquet measuring with his eyes
His neighbor's make and might : and Pelleas
look'd
Noble among the noble, for he dream'd
His lady loved him, and he knew himself
Loved of the King : and him his new-made
knight
Worshipt, whose lightest whisper moved him
more
Than all the ranged reasons of the world.

Then blush'd and brake the morning of the
jousts,
And this was call'd " The Tournament of
Youth " :
For Arthur, loving his young knight, with-
held
His older and his mightier from the lists,
That Pelleas might obtain his lady's love,
According to her promise, and remain
Lord of the tourney. And Arthur had the
jousts
Down in the flat field by the shore of Usk
Holden : the gilded parapets were crown'd
With faces, and the great tower fill'd with eyes

Up to the summit, and the trumpets blew.
There all day long Sir Pelleas kept the field
With honor: so by that strong hand of his
The sword and golden circlet were achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved: the
heat
Of pride and glory fired her face: her eye
Sparkled: she caught the circlet from his
lance,
And there before the people crown'd herself:
So for the last time she was gracious to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space — her look
Bright for all others, cloudier on her knight —
Linger'd Ettarre: and seeing Pelleas droop,
Said Guinevere, "We marvel at thee much,
O damsel, wearing this unsunny face
To him who won thee glory!" and she said,
"Had ye not held your Lancelot in your
bower,

My Queen, he had not won." Whereat the
Queen,
As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,
Glanced down upon her, turn'd and went
her way.

But after, when her damsels, and herself,
And those three knights all set their faces
home,
Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw him cried,
"Damsels — and yet I should be shamed to
say it —

I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him back
Among yourselves. Would rather that we
had
Some rough old knight who knew the worldly
way,

Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride
And jest with: take him to you, keep him off,
And pamper him with papmeat, if ye will,
Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,
Such as the wholesome mothers tell their
boys.

Nay, should ye try him with a merry one
To find his mettle, good: and if he fly us,
Small matter! let him." This her damsels
heard,

And mindful of her small and cruel hand,
They, closing round him thro' the journey
home,

Acted her hest, and always from her side
Restrain'd him with all manner of device,
So that he could not come to speech with her.
And when she gain'd her castle, upsprang the
bridge,

Down rang the grate of iron thro' the groove,
And he was left alone in open field.

"These be the ways of ladies," Pelleas
thought,
"To those who love them, trials of our faith.
Yea, let her prove me to the uttermost,
For loyal to the uttermost am I."
So made his moan; and, darkness falling,
sought

A priory not far off, there lodged, but rose
With morning every day, and moist or dry

Full-arm'd upon his charger all day long
Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to him.

And this persistence turn'd her scorn to
wrath.
Then calling her three knights, she charged
them, "Out!
And drive him from the walls." And out they
came,

But Pelleas overthrew them as they dash'd
Against him one by one; and these return'd,
But still he kept his watch beneath the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate; and once,
A week beyond, while walking on the walls
With her three knights, she pointed down-
ward, "Look,

He haunts me — I cannot breathe — be-
sieves me;

Down I strike him I put my hate into your
strokes,

And drive him from my walls." And down
they went,

And Pelleas overthrew them one by one;
And from the tower above him cried Ettarre,
"Bind him, and bring him in."

Then let the strong hand, which had over-
thrown

Her minion-knights, by those he overthrew
Be bounden straight, and so they brought
him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre, the
sight

Of her rich beauty made him at one glance
More bondman in his heart than in his bonds.
Yet with good cheer he spake, "Behold me,
Lady,

A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will;
And if thou keep me in thy donjon here,
Content am I so that I see thy face

But once a day: for I have sworn my vows,
And thou hast given thy promise, and I know
That all these pains are trials of my faith,
And that thyself when thou hast seen me
strain'd

And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length
Yield me thy love and know me for thy
knight."

Then she began to rail so bitterly,
With all her damsels, he was stricken mute;
But when she mock'd his vows and the great
King,

Lighted on words: "For pity of thine own
self,

Peace, Lady, peace: is he not thine and
mine?"

"Thou fool," she said, "I never heard his
voice

But long'd to break away. Unbind him now,
And thrust him out of doors: for save he be
Fool to the midmost marrow of his bones,
He will return no more." And those, her
three,

Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him from
the gate.

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and no one open'd to him.

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lights, she pointed down-

I cannot breathe — be-

I put my hate into your

in my walls." And down

threw them one by one;

above him cried Ettarre,
ing him in."

He heard her voice :
hand, which had over-

by those he overthrew

at, and so they brought

ame before Ettarre, the

made him at one glance

his heart than in his bonds.

he spake, " Behold me,

vassal of thy will ;

in thy donjon here,

I see thy face

I have sworn my vows,

thy promise, and I know

are trials of my faith,

en thou hast seen me

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re." And those, her

and thrust him from

And after this, a week beyond, again
She call'd them, saying, " There he watches
yet,

There like a dog before his master's door !
Kick'd, he returns : do ye not hate him, ye ?
Ye know yourselves : how can ye bide at
peace,

Affronted with his fulsome innocence ?
Are ye but creatures of the board and bed,
No men to strike ? fall on him all at once,
And if ye slay him I reck not : if ye fail,
Give ye the slave mine order to be bound,
Bind him as heretofore, and bring him in :
It may be ye shall slay him in his bonds."

She spake ; and at her will they couch'd
their spears,

Three against one : and Gawain passing by,
Bound upon solitary adventure, saw
Low down beneath the shadow of those
towers

A villany, three to one : and thro' his heart
The fire of honor and all noble deeds
Flash'd, and he call'd, " I strike upon thy
side —

The catiffs ! " " Nay," said Pelleas, " but
forbear ;

He needs no aid who doth his lady's will."

So Gawain, looking at the villany done,
Forebore, but in his heat and eagerness
Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog, withheld
A moment from the vermin that he sees
Before him, shivers, ere he springs and kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to three ;
And they rose up, and bound, and brought
him in.

Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas, burn'd
Full on her knights in many an evil name
Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten
hound :

" Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit to touch,
Far less to bind, your victor, and thrust him
out,

And let who will release him from his bonds.
And if he comes again " — there she brake
short ;

And Pelleas answer'd, " Lady, for indeed
I loved you and I deem'd you beautiful,
I cannot brook to see your beauty marr'd
Thro' evil spite : and if ye love me not,
I cannot bear to dream you so forsworn :
I had liefer ye were worthy of my love,
Than to be loved again of you — farewell ;
And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my love,
Vex not yourself : ye will not see me more."

While thus he spake, she gazed upon the
man

Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds, and
thought,

" Why have I push'd him from me ? this man
loves,

If love there be : yet him I loved not. Why ?
I deem'd him fool ? yea, so ? or that in him
A something — was it nobler than myself ? —
Seem'd my reproach ? He is not of my kind.

He could not love me, did he know me well.
Nay, let him go — and quickly." And her
knights
Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden out of
door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed him from
his bond —
And flung them o'er the walls ; and afterward
Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's rag,
" Faith of my body," he said, " and art
thou not —

Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur made
Knight of his table ; yea and he that won
The circlet ? wherefore hast thou so defamed
Thy brotherhood in me and all the rest,
As let these catiffs on thee work their will ?"

And Pelleas answer'd, " O, their wills are
hers

For whom I won the circlet ; and mine, hers.
Thus to be bounden, so to see her face,
Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mockery
now,

Other than when I found her in the woods ;
And tho' she hath me bounden but in spite,
And all to flout me, when they bring me in,
Let me be bounden, I shall see her face ;
Else must I die thro' mine unhappiness."

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho' in scorn,
" Why, let my lady bind me if she will,
And let my lady beat me if she will ;
But an she send her delegate to thrall
These fighting hands of mine — Christ kill
me then

But I will slice him handless by the wrist,
And let my lady sear the stump for him,
Howl as he may. But hold me for your friend:
Come, ye know nothing : here I pledge my
troth,

Yea, by the honor of the Table Round,
I will be leal to thee and work thy work,
And tame thy jailing princess to thine hand.
Lend me thine horse and arms, and I will say
That I have slain thee. She will let me in
To hear the manner of thy fight and fall :
Then, when I come within her counsels, then
From prime to vespers will I chant thy praise
As proudest knight and truest lover, more
Than any have sung thee living, till she long
To have thee back in lusty life again,
Not to be bound, save by white bonds and
warm,

Dearer than freedom. Wherefore now thy
horse

And armor : let me go : be comforted :

Give me three days to melt her fancy, and
hope

The third night hence will bring thee news
of gold "

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all his arms,
Saving the goodly sword, his prize, and took
Gawain's, and said, " Betray me not, but
help —

Art thou not he whom men call light-of-
love ?"

"Ay," said Gawain, "for women be so light."

Then bounded forward to the castle walls,
And raised a bugle hanging from his neck,
And winded it, and that so musically
That all the old echoes hidden in the wall
Rang out like hollow woods at hunting-tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the tower;
"Avant," they cried, "our lady loves thee not."

But Gawain lifting up his visor said,
"Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's court,
And I have slain this Pelleas whom ye hate:
Behold his horse and armor. Open gate,
And I will make you merry."

And down they ran,
Her damsels, crying to their lady, "Lo!
Pelleas is dead—he told us, he that hath
His horse and armor: will ye let him in?
He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of the court,
Sir Gawain—there he waits below the wall,
Blowing his bugle as who should say him nay."

And so, leave given, straight on thro' open
door
Rode Gawain, whom she greeted courteously.
"Dead, is it so?" she ask'd. "Ay, ay," said
he,

"And off in dying cried upon your name."
"Pity on him," she answer'd, "a good
knight."

But never let me bide one hour at peace."
"Ay," thought Gawain, "and ye be fair
enow:

But I to your dead man have given my troth,
That whom ye loathe him will I make you
love."

So those three days, aimless about the land,
Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering
Waited, until the third night brought amoon,
With promise of large light on woods and
ways.

The night was hot: he could not rest, but
rode

Ere midnight to her walls, and bound his
horse

Hard by the gates. Wide open were the gates,
And no watch kept; and in thro' these he
past,

And heard but his own steps, and his own
heart

Beating, for nothing moved but his own self,
And his own shadow. Then he crost the court,
And saw the postern portal also wide
Yawning; and up a slope of garden, all
Of roses white and red, and wild ones mixt
And overgrowing them, went on, and found,
Here too, all hush'd below the mellow moon,
Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave
Came lightening downward, and so spilt itself
Among the roses, and was lost again.

Then was he aware that white pavilions rose,
Three from the bushes, gilden-peak'd: in one,

Red after revel, droned her lurdan knights
Slumbering, and their three squires across
their feet:

In one, their malice on the placid lip
Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her damsels lay:
And in the third, the circlet of the jousts
Bound on her brow, were Gawain and Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro' the leaf
To find a nest and feels a snake, he drew:
Back, as a coward slinks from what he fears
To cope with, or a traitor proven, or hound
Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame
Creep with his shadow thro' the court again,
Fingering at his sword-handle until he stood
There on the castle-bridge once more, and
thought,

"I will go back, and slay them where they
lie."

And so went back, and seeing them yet in
sleep

Said, "Ye, that so dishallow the holy sleep,
Your sleep is death," and drew the sword,
and thought,

"What! slay a sleeping knight? the King
hath bound

And sworn me to this brotherhood"; again,
"Alas that ever a knight should be so false."

Then turn'd, and so return'd, and groaning
laid

The naked sword athwart their naked throats,
There left it, and them sleeping; and she lay,
The circlet of the tourney round her brows,
And the sword of the tourney across her
throat.

And forth he past, and mounting on his
horse

Stared at her towers that, larger than them-
selves

In their own darkness, throng'd into the
moon.

Then crush'd the saddle with his thighs, and
clench'd

His hands, and madden'd with himself and
moan'd:

"Would they have risen against me in
their blood

At the last day? I might have answer'd them
Even before high God. O towers so strong,

So solid, would that even while I gaze
The crack of earthquake shivering to your
base

Split you, and Hell burst up your harlot roofs
Bellowing, and clarr'd you thro' and thro' and
within,

Black as the harlot's heart—hollow as a
skull!

Let the fierce east scream thro' your eyelet-
holes,

And whirl the dust of harlots round and
round

In dung and nettles! hiss, snake—I saw
him there—

Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell. Who yells
Here in the still sweet summer night, but I—

I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd her
fool?
Fool, beast — he, she, or I? myself most
fool;
Beast too, as lacking human wit — disgraced,
Dishonor'd all for trial of true love —
Love? — we be all alike: only the king
Hath made us fools and liars. O noble vows!
O great and sane and simple race of brutes!
That own no lust because they have no law!
For why should I have loved her to my
shame?
I loathe her, as I loved her to my shame.
I never loved her, I but lusted for her —
Away —

He dash'd the rowel into his horse,
And bounded forth and vanish'd thro' the
night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch on her
throat,
Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd her —
Go Gawain: "Liar, for thou hast not slain
This Pelleas" here he stood and might have
slain
Me and thyself." And he that tells the tale
says that her ever-veering fancy turn'd
To Pelleas, as the one true knight on earth,
And only lover: and thro' her love her life
Wasted and pined, desiring him in vain

But he by wild and way, for half the night,
And over hard and soft, striking the sod
From out the soft, the spark from off the hard,
Rode till the star above the wakening sun,
Beside that tower where Percivale was
cowl'd,
Glanced from the rosy forehead of the dawn.
For so the words were flash'd into his heart
He knew not whence or wherefore: "O
sweet star,
Pure on the virgin forehead of the dawn."
And there he would have wept, but felt his
eyes
Harder and drier than a fountain bed
In summer: thither came the village girls
And linger'd talking, and they come no more
Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it from the
heights
Again with living waters in the change
Of seasons: hard his eyes; harder his heart
Seem'd; but so weary were his limbs, that he,
Gasping, "Of Arthur's hall am I, but here,
Here let me rest and die," cast himself down,
And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep; so lay,
Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain fired
The hall of Merlin, and the morning star
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame, and
fell.

He woke, and being ware of some one nigh,
Sent hands upon him, as to tear him, crying
"False I and I held thee pure as Guinevere."

But Percivale stood near him and replied,
"Am I but false as Guinevere is pure?
Or art thou mazed with dreams? or being one

Of our free-spoken Table hast not heard
That Lancelot" — there he check'd himself
and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as with one
Who gets a wound in battle, and the sword
That made it plunges thro' the wound again,
And pricks it deeper: and he shrank and
wail'd,

"Is the Queen false?" and Percivale was
mute.

"Have any of our Round Table held their
vows?"

And Percivale made answer not a word.
"Is the king true?" "The king!" said
Percivale.

"Why then let men couple at once with
wolves.

What! art thou mad?"

But Pelleas, leaping up,
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his horse
And fled — all pity upon his horse had he,
Or on himself, or any, and when he met
A cripple; one that held a hand for alms —
Hunch'd as he was, and like an old dwarf —
him

That turns its back on the salt blast, the boy
Paused not but overrode him, shouting,
"False,

And false with Gawain!" and so left him
bruised

And batter'd, and fled on, and hill and
wood

Went ever streaming by him till the gloom,
That follows on the turning of the world,

Darken'd the common path: he twitch'd the
reins,

And made his beast that better knew it,
swerve

Now off it and now on; but when he saw
High up in heaven the hall that Merlin built,

Blackening against the dead-green stripes
of Even,

"Black nest of rats," he groan'd, "ye build
too high."

Not long thereafter from the city gates
Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,
"Warm with a gracious parting from the
Queen,

Peace at his heart, and gazing at a star
And marvelling what it was: on whom the
boy,

Across the silent seeded meadow-grass
Borne, "clash'd: and Lancelot, saying,

"What name hast thou
That ridest here so blindly and so hard?"

"I have no name," he shouted, "a scourge
am I,

To lash the treasons of the Table Round."
"Yea, but thy name?" "I have many
names," he cried:

"I am wrath and shame and hate and evil
fame,

And like a poisonous wind I pass to blast
And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the
Queen."

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

"First over me," said Lancelot, "shalt thou pass;
 "Fight, therefore," yell'd the other, and
 either knight
 Drew back a space, and when they closed,
 at once
 The weary steed of Pelleas floundering flung
 His rider, who called out from the dark field,
 "Thou art false as Hell: slay me: I have
 no sword."
 Then Lancelot, "Yea, between thy lips—
 and sharp;
 But here will I disedge it by thy death."
 "Slay then," he shriek'd, "my will is to be
 slain."
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the fall'n,
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then
 spake:
 "Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say thy
 say."
 And Lancelot slowly rode his war-horse
 back
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief while
 Caught his unbroken limbs from the dark
 field,
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced that
 both
 Brake into hall together, worn and pale.
 There with her knights and dames was
 Guinevere.
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas,
 Him who had not greeted her, but cast him-
 self
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing. "Have
 ye fought?"
 She ask'd of Lancelot. "Ay, my Queen,"
 he said.
 "And thou hast overthrown him?" "Ay,
 my Queen."
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, "O young
 knight,
 Hath the great heart of knighthood in thee
 fail'd
 So far thou canst not bide, unfrowardly,
 A fall from him?" Then, for he answer'd not,
 "Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the Queen,
 May help them, loose thy tongue, and let me
 know."
 But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce
 She quail'd; and he, hissing "I have no
 sword,"
 Sprang from the door into the dark. The
 Queen
 Look'd hard upon her lover, he on her;
 And each foresaw the dolorous day to be:
 And all talk died, as in a grove all song
 Beneath the shadow of some bird of prey,
 Then a long silence came upon the hall,
 And Modred thought, "The time is hard at
 hand."

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
 First made and latest left of all the knights,

Told, when the man was no more than a voice
 In the white winter of his age, to those
 With whom he dwelt, new faces, other minds.

Before that last weird battle in the west
 There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain
 kill'd

In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown
 Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
 Went shrilling, "Hollow, hollow all delight!
 Hail, king! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
 Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.
 And I am blown along a wandering wind,
 And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight."
 And fainter onward like wild birds that
 change

Their season in the night and wail their way
 From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the
 dream

Shrill'd; but in going mingled with dim
 cries

Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
 As of some lonely city sack'd by night,
 When all is lost, and wife and child with wail
 Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and
 call'd,

"Who spake? A dream. O light upon the
 wind,

Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these
 dim cries

Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste and
 wild

Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and
 spake:

"O me, my king, let pass whatever will,
 Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field;
 But in their stead thy name and glory cling
 To all high places like a golden cloud
 Forever: but as yet thou shalt not pass.

Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
 Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
 And care not thou for dreams from him, but
 rise—

I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
 And with him many of thy people, and knights
 Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but gross-
 er grown

Than heathen, spitting at thy vows and thee.
 Right well in heart they know thee for the
 King.

Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
 "Far other is this battle in the west
 Whereto we move, than when we strove in
 youth.

And thrust the heathen from the Roman
 wall,
 And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom is
 mine

To war against my people and my knights.
 The king who fights his people fights himself.
 And they my knights, who loved me once,
 the stroke

That strikes them dead is as my death to me.
 Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way

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new faces, other minds.

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Thro' this blind haze, which ever since I saw
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
Hath folded in the passes of the world."

Then rose the King and moved his host by
night,

And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by
league,

Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse —
A land of old upheaven from the abyss

By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
And the long mountains ended in a coast
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away

The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no more,
And he that fled no further fly the King;

And there, that day when the great light of
heaven

Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea they
closed.

Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.

A deathwhite mist slept over sand and sea:
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it,
drew

Down with his blood, till all his heart was
cold

With formless fear; and ev'n on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought,
For friend and foe were shadows in the
mist,

And friend slew friend not knowing whom
he slew;

And some had visions out of golden youth,
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts

Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
Was many a noble deed, many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in single
fights,

And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard
mail hewn,

Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands,
the crash

Of battleaxes on shatter'd helms, and shrieks
After the Christ, of those who falling down
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the
mist;

And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphem-
ies,

Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of the
lungs

In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one death-bed after wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death
Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that shore,
Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous
day

Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
A bitter wind, clear from the North, and
blew

The mist aside, and with that wind the tide

Rose, and the pale king glanced across the
field

Of battle: but no man was moving there;
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave

Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets, of the fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had fought
with Rome,

And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day long
Had held the field of battle was the King:

"Hearest thou this great voice that
shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm whereon we
move,

And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as tho' they had not died for me? —
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall'n
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be king.
Behold, I seem but king among the dead."

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: "My
King,

King everywhere! and so the dead have
kings,

There also will I worship thee as king
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that
brought

The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of thine
house."

Then spake the King: "My house hath
been my doom.

But call not thou this traitor my house
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with me.
My house are rather they who swear my
vows,

Yea, even while they brake them, own'd me
king.

And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,
When all the purport of my throne hath fail'd,
That quick or dead thou holdest me for king.

King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
Yet, ere I pass." And uttering this the king
Made at the man: then Modred smote his
liege

Hard on that helm, which many a heathen
sword

Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was
deep,

The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land:
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a
sleep

They sleep—the men I loved. I think that
we

Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin swore that I should come again
To rule once more; but let what will be, be.
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest
how

In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In after time, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me
word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm—
A little thing may harm a wounded man;
Yet I thy heat will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee
word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, step-
ping down
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran
forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond
sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
That way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd

There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I
gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what has
heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and
pale:

"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thine name,
Not rendering true answer, as becometh
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me
word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he
smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud:

"And if indeed I cast the brand away
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many
men.

What good should follow this, if this were
done?

What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he
does.

What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to after time, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty
kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur',
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.
So might some old man speak in the after-
time

To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were
lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded
King.

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Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
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Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heav-
ily :
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Art^h r, much in
wrath :
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou
art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious
hilt:

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee
hence:

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the
sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The
great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in
an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd
him

Three times, and drew him under in the
mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker
breath :
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or
seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the
gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling
him;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd
him
Three times, and drew him under in the
mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing
hard :
"My end draws nigh : 't is time that I were
gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my
weight,
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose.
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not
words:

Then took with care, and kneeling on one
knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid
hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted
hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the
King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick,
quick!

I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to
ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he
walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a
goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he
based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky
barge.

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were
ware

That all the decks were dense with stately
forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—
by these

Three Queens with crowns of gold : and from
them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge";
 So to the barge they came. There those three Queens
 Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
 But she, that rose the tallest of them all
 And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
 And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
 And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
 And dropping bitter tears against his brow.
 Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
 And colorless, and like the wither'd moon
 Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
 And all his graves and cuisses dash'd with drops
 Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
 That made his forehead like a rising sun
 High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with dust;
 Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
 So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
 "Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
 For now I see the true old times are dead,
 When every morning brought a noble chance,
 And every chance brought out a noble knight.
 Such times have been: not since the light that led
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
 But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
 Which was an image of the mighty world;
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,
 And the days darken round me, and the years,
 Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
 "The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
 Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
 I have lived my life, and that which I have done
 May He within himself make pure! but thou,
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
 For what are men better than sheep or goats

That nourish a blind life within the brain,
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
 Both for themselves and those who call them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
 But now farewell. I am going a long way
 With these thou seest—if indeed I go
 (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)—
 To the island-valley of Avilion;
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
 And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
 Revolving many memories, till the hull
 Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

At length he groan'd, and turning slowly clomb
 The last hard footstep of that iron car;
 Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet, and cried,
 "He passes to be king among the dead,
 And after healing of his grievous wound
 He comes again; but—if he come no more—
 O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black boat,
 Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat we gazed
 On that high day, when, clothed with living light,
 They stood before his throne in silence, friends
 Of Arthur, who should help him at his need?"

Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint
 As from beyond the limit of the world,
 Like the last echo born of a great cry,
 Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
 Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and clomb
 E'en to the highest he could climb, and saw,
 Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
 Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the king,
 Down that long water opening on the deep
 Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
 From less to less and vanish into light.
 And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

MISCELLANEOUS.

NORTHERN FARMER.

NEW STYLE.

I.

DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they
canters awa'ay?
Proputt, proputt, proputt — that 's what
I 'ears 'em saay.
Proputt, proputt, proputt — Sam, thou 's
an ass for thy painins:
Theer 's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in
all thy braains.

II.

WOÄ — theer 's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam;
yon 's parson's 'ouse —
Donsn't thou know that a man mun be eäther
a man or a mouse?
Time to think on it then; for thou 'll be
twenty to weeläk.*
Proputt, proputt — woä then woä — let ma
'ear mysén speäk.

III.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as bein'
a-talkin' o' thee;
Thou 's been talkin' to muther, an' she bein'
a tellin' it me.
Thou 'll not marry for munny — thou 's sweet
upo' parson's lass —
Noä — thou 'll marry fur luvv — an' we boäth
on us thinks tha an ass.

IV.

Seeä'd her todaäy goä by — Sääint's-daäy
— they was ringin' the bells.
She 's a beauty thou thinks — an' soä is
scoors o' gells,
Them as 'as munny an' all — wot 's a beauty?
— the flower as blaws.
But proputt, proputt sticks, an' proputt,
proputt graws.

V.

Do'ant be stunt:† taäke time: I knows
what maäkes tha sa mad.
Warn't I craiz'd fur the lasses mysén when
I wur a lad?
But I know'd a Quaker feller as often 'as
towd ma this:
"Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer
munny is!"

VI.

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy muther
coom to 'and,
Wi' lots o' munny laald by, an' a nicetish bit
o' land.

* This week.

† Obstinate.

Maäybe she warn't a beauty: — I niver giv
it a thowt —
But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as
a lass as 'ant nowt?

VII.

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a
nowt when 'e 's deäd,
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and ad-
dle* her breäid:
Why? fur 'e 's nobbut a curate, an' weänt
nivr git naw 'igher;
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afor 'e
coom'd to the shire.

VIII.

And thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o'
'Varsity debt,
Stook to his taail they did, an' 'e 'ant got
shut on 'em yet.
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to
lend 'im a shove,
Woorse nor a far-welter'd † yow: fur, Sam-
my, 'e married fur luvv.

IX.

Luvv? What 's luvv? thou can luvv thy
lass an' 'er munny too,
Maakin' 'em goä together as they've good
right to do.
Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er
munny laald by?
Naäy — fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor
fur it: reäson why.

X.

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry
the lass,
Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boäth
on us thinks tha an ass.
Woä then, proputt, wiltha? — an ass as
near as maye nowt ‡ —
Woä then, wiltha? dangtha! — the bees is as
fell as owt. §

XI.

Break me a bit o' the eash for his 'eäd, lad,
out o' the fence!
Gentleman burn! what 's gentleman burn?
is it shillins an' pence?
Proputt, proputt 's 'evrything 'ere, an',
Sammy, I 'm blest
If it isn't the säime oop yonder, fur them as
'as it 's the best.

* Earn.

† Or fow-welter'd — said of a sheep lying on its
back in the furrow.

‡ Makes nothing.

§ The flies are as fierce as anything.

XII.

Tis'n them—as 'as munny as breaks into
 'ouses an' steals,
 Them as 'as coats to their backs an' taakes
 their regular meals.
 Noð, but it's them as niver knows wheer a
 meal's to be 'ad.
 Taake my word for it, Sammy, the poor in
 a loomp is bad.

XIII.

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a
 beän a läzy lot,
 Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whin-
 iver munny was got.
 Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästwaays 'is
 munny was 'id.
 But 'e tued an' moi'd 'issén deäd, an' 'e died
 a good un, 'e did.

XIV.

Look thou theer wheer Wigglesby beck
 comes out by the 'ill!
 Feyther run up to the farm, an' I runs up
 to the mill;
 An' I 'll run up to the brig, an' that thou 'll
 live to see;
 And if thou marries a good un I 'll leäve the
 land to thee.

XV.

Thim 's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I
 means to stick;
 But if thou marries a bad un, I 'll leäve the
 land to Dick. —
 Coom oop, propuppy, propuppy — that 's
 what I 'ears 'im saay —
 Propuppy, propuppy, propuppy — canter an'
 canter awaay.

THE VICTIM.

I.

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,
 A famine after laid them low,
 Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,
 For on them brake the sudden foe;
 So thick they died the people cried,
 "The Gods are moved against the land."
 The Priest in horror about his altar
 To Thor and Odin lifted a hand:
 "Help us from famine
 And plague and strife!
 What would you have of us?
 Human life?
 Were it our nearest,
 Were it our dearest,
 (Answer, O answer)
 We give you his life."

II.

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,
 And cattle died, and deer in wood,

And bird in air, and fishes turn'd
 And whiten'd all the rolling flood;
 And dead men lay all over the way,
 Or down in a furrow scathed with flame:
 And ever and aye the Priesthood moan'd
 Till at last it seem'd that an answer came:
 "The King is happy
 In child and wife;
 Take you his dearest,
 Give us a life."

III.

The Priest went out by heath and hill;
 The King was hunting in the wild;
 They found the mother sitting still;
 She cast her arms about the child.
 The child was only eight summers old,
 His beauty still with his years increased.
 His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,
 He seem'd a victim due to the priest.
 The Priest beheld him,
 And cried with joy,
 "The Gods have answer'd:
 We give them the boy."

IV.

The King return'd from out the wild,
 He bore but little game in hand;
 The mother said: "They have taken the
 child
 To spill his blood and heal the land:
 The land is sick, the people diseased,
 And blight and famine on all the lea:
 The holy Gods, they must be appeased,
 So I pray you tell the truth to me.
 They have taken our son,
 They will have his life.
 Is ~~he~~ your dearest?
 Or I the wife?"

V.

The King bent low, with hand on brow,
 He stay'd his arms upon his knee:
 "O wife, what use to answer now?
 For now the Priest has judged for me."
 The King was shaken with holy fear;
 "The Gods," he said, "would have chos-
 en well;
 Yet both are near, and both are dear,
 And which the dearest I cannot tell!"
 But the Priest was happy,
 His victim won:
 "We have his dearest,
 His only son!"

VI.

The rites prepared, the victim bared,
 The knife uprising toward the blow,
 To the altar-stone she sprang alone,
 "Me, not my darling, no!"
 He caught her away with a sudden cry;
 Suddenly from him brake his wife,
 And shrieking, "I am his dearest, I —
 I am his dearest!" rush'd on the knife.
 And the Priest was happy,
 "O Father Odin.

We give you a life,
Which was his nearest?
Who was his dearest?
The Gods have answer'd;
We give them the wife!"

WAGES.

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of
song,
Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an
endless sea—
Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right
the wrong—
Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover
of glory she:
Give her the glory of going on, and still
to be.

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of
Virtue be dust,
Would she have heart to endure for the life
of the worm and the fly?
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats
of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a
summer sky:
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM.

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the
hills and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him
who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that
which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we
not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body
and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division
from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason
why?
For is He not all but thou, that hast power
to feel "I am I?"

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou
fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled
splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit
with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than
hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us
rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet
His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says
the fool;
For all we have power to see is a straight staff
bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear and the eye
of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—
were it not He?

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies;—
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

LUCRETIIUS.

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found
Her master cold; for when the morning
flush
Of passion and the first embrace had died
Between them, tho' he loved her none the
less,
Yet often when the woman heard his foot
Return from paces in the field, and ran
To greet him with a kiss, the master took
Small notice, or austerely, for—his mind
Half buried in some weightier argument,
Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise
And long roll of the Hexameter—he past
To turn and ponder those three hundred
scrolls.
Left by the Teacher whom he held divine.
She brook'd it not; but wrathful, petulant,
Dreaming some rival, sought and found a
witch
Who brew'd the philtre which had power,
they said,
To lead an errant passion home again.
And this, at times, she mingled with his
drink,
And this destroy'd him; for the wicked broth
Confused the chemic labor of the blood,
And tickling the brute brain within the man's
Made havoc among those tender cells, and
check'd
His power to shape: he loath'd himself;
and once
After a tempest woke upon a morn
That mock'd him with returning calm, and
cried:

"Storm in the night! for thrice I heard
the rain
Rushing; and once the flash of a thunder-
bolt—
Methought I never saw so fierce a fork—
Struck out the streaming mountain-side, and
show'd
A riotous confluence of watercourses

Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

"Storm, and what dreams, ye holy Gods,
what dreams!
For thrice I waken'd after dreams. Per-
chance

We do but recollect the dreams that come
Just ere the waking: terrible! for it seem'd
A void was made in Nature: all her bonds
Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-streams
And torrents of her myriad universe,
Ruining along the illimitable inane,
Fly on to clash together again, and make
Another and another frame of things
Forever: that was mine, my dream, I knew it
Of and belonging to me, as the dog
With inward yelp and restless forefoot plies
His function of the woodland: but the next!
I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed
Came driving rainlike down again on earth,
And where it dash'd the reddening meadow,
sprang

No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth,
For these I thought my dream would show
to me,

But girls, Hetaïrai, curious in their art,
Hired animalisms, vile as those that made
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies worse
Than taught they fable of the quiet Gods.
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and round
me drove

In narrowing circles till I yell'd again
Half suffocated, and sprang up, and saw—
Was it the first beam of my latest day?

"Then, then, from utter gloom stood out
the breasts,
The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a sword
Now over and now under, now direct,
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down
shamed

At all that beauty; and as I stared, a fire,
The fire that left a roofless Iliion,
Shot out of them, and scorched me that I
woke.

"Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus, thine,
Because I would not one of thine own doves,
Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee? thine,
Forgetful how my rich procemion makes
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,
In lays that will outlast thy Deity?

"Deity? nay, thy worshippers. My tongue
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of these
Angers thee most, or angers thee at all?
Not if thou be'st of those who, far aloof
From envy, hate and pity, and spite and
scorn,
Live the great life which all our greatest fain
Would follow, centr'd in eternal calm.

"Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like our-
selves
Touch, and be touch'd, then would I cry to
thee
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender arms

Round him, and keep him from the lust o.
Blood
That makes a steaming slaughter-house of
Rome.

"Ay, but I meant not thee: I meant not
her,
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and
tempt
The Trojan, while his neat-herds were
abroad;

Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter wept
Her Deity false in human-amorous tears;
Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called
Calliope to grace his golden verse—
Ay, and this Kypris also—did I take
That popular name of thine to shadow forth
The all-generating powers and genial heat
Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the thick
blood

Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs are
glad

Nosing the mother's udder, and the bird
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of
flowers:

Which things appear the work of mighty
Gods.

"The Gods! and if I go my work is left
Unfinish'd—*if* I go. The Gods, who haunt
The lucid interspace of world and world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder mounts,
Nor sound of human sorrow moans to mar
Their sacred everlasting calm! and such,
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain
Letting his own life go. The Gods, the
Gods!

If all be atoms, how then should the Gods
Being atomic not be dissoluble,
Not follow the great law? My master held
That Gods there are, for all men so believe.
I prest my footsteps into his, and meant
Surely to lead my Memmius in a train
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof
That Gods there are, and deathless. Meant?

I meant?
I have forgotten what I meant: my mind
Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.

"Look where another of our Gods, the
Sun,
Apollo, Delius, or of older use
All-seeing Hyperion—what you will—
Has mounted yonder; since he never sware,
Except his wrath were wreak'd on wretched
man,

That he would only shine among the dead
Hereafter: tales! for never yet on earth
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roasting ox
Moan round the spit—nor knows he what
he sees;
King of the East altho' he seem, and girt

keep him from the lust o.
 ming slaughter-house of
 not thee; 'I meant not
 of Ida shook to see
 et heaven of hers, and
 his neat-herds were
 wounded hunter wept
 man-amorous tears;
 less apple-arbiter
 ther, O ye Gods,
 t Sicilian called
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 wers and genial heat
 strikes thro' the thick
 large, and lambs are
 dder, and the bird
 ce amid the blaze of
 the work of mighty

go my work is left
 the Gods, who haunt
 world and world.
 oud, or moves a wind,
 white star of snow,
 thunder moans,
 throw mounts to mar
 calm! and such,
 vine a calm,
 it, man may gain
 o. The Gods, the
 n should the Gods
 oluble,
 ? My master held
 all men so believe.
 his, and meant
 ius in a train
 d to the proof
 deathless. Meant?
 eant: my mind
 ties are lamed.
 of our Gods, the
 use
 at you will —
 ce he never sware,
 ak'd on wretched
 among the dead
 yet on earth
 bits of roasting ox
 knows he what
 seem, and girl

With song and flame and fragrance, slowly
 lifts

His golden feet on those empurpled stairs
 That climb into the windy halls of heaven:
 And here he glances on an eye new-born,
 And gets for greeting but a wall of pain;
 And here he stays upon a freezing orb
 That fain would gaze upon him to the last;
 And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n
 And closed by those who mourn a friend in
 vain.

Not thankful that his troubles are no more.
 And me, altho' his fire is on my face
 Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell
 Whether I mean this day to end myself,
 Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,
 That men like soldiers may not quit the post
 Allotted by the Gods: but he that holds
 The Gods are careless, wherefore need he care
 Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at once,
 Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and sink
 Past earthquake — ay, and gout and stone,
 that break

Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-life,
 And wretched age — and worst disease of all,
 These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,
 And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,
 Abominable, strangers at my hearth
 Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,
 The phantom husks of something foully done,
 And fleeing thro' the boundless universe,
 And blasting the long quiet of my breast
 With animal heat and dire insanity?

"How should the mind, except it loved
 them, clasp

These idols to herself? or do they fly
 Now thinner, and now thicker, like the flakes
 In a fall of snow, and so press in, perforce
 Of multitude, as crowds that in an hour
 Of civic tumult jam the doors, and bear
 The keepers down, and throng, their rags and
 they,

The basest, far into that council-hall
 Where sit the best and stateliest of the land?

"Can I not fling this horror off me again,
 Seeing with how great ease Nature can smile,
 Balmier and nobler from her bath of storm,
 At random ravage? and how easily
 The mountain there has cast his cloudy
 slough,

Now towering o'er him in serenest air,
 A mountain o'er a mountain, — ay, and
 within
 All hollow as the hopes and fears of men.

"But who was he, that in the garden
 snared

Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale
 To laugh at — more to laugh at in myself —
 For look! what is it? there? yon arbutus
 Totters; a noiseless riot underneath
 Strikes through the wood, sets all the tops
 quivering —

The mountain quickens intr Nymph and
 Fauu;

And here an Oread — how the sun delights

To glance and shift about her slippery sides,
 And rosy knees and supple roundedness,
 And budded bosom-peaks — who this way
 runs

Before the rest — A satyr, a satyr, see,
 Follows; but him I proved impossible;
 Twy-natured is no nature: yet he draws
 Nearer and nearer, and I scan him now
 Beastlier than any phantom of his kind
 That ever butted his rough brother-brute
 For lust or lusty blood or provender:
 I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him; and she
 Loathes him as well; such a precipitate heel,
 Fledged as it were with Mercury's ankle-
 wing,

Whirls her to me: but will she fling herself,
 Shameless upon me? Catch her, goatfoot:
 nay,

Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wilderness,
 And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide I do I
 wish —

What? — that the bush were leafless? or to
 whelm

All of them in one massacre? O ye Gods,
 I know you careless, yet, behold, to you
 From childly wont and ancient use I call —
 I thought I lived securely as yourselves —
 No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-spite,
 No madness of ambition, avarice, none:
 No larger feast than under plane or pine
 With neighbors laid along the grass, to take
 Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,
 Affirming each his own philosophy —
 Nothing to mar the sober majesties
 Ofsettled, sweet, Epicurean life.

But now it seems some unseen monster
 lays

His vast and filthy hands upon my will,
 Wrenching it backward into his; and spoils
 My bliss in being; and it was not great;
 For save when shutting reasons up in rhythm,
 Or Heliconian honey in living words,
 To make a truth less harsh, I often grew
 Tired of so much within our little life,
 Or of so little in our little life —
 Poor little life that toddles half an hour
 Crown'd with a flower or two, and there an
 end —

And since the nobler pleasure seems to fade,
 Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,
 Not manlike end myself? — our privilege --
 What beast has heart to do it? And what
 man,

What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph
 thus?

Not I; not he, who bears one name with her,
 Whose death-blow struck the dateless doom
 of kings,

When brooking not the Tarquin in her veins,
 She made her blood in sight of Collatine
 And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,
 Spout from the maiden fountain in her heart.
 And from it sprang the Commonwealth,
 which breaks

As I am breaking now!

"And therefore now
 Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,

Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart
Those blind beginnings that have made me
man

Dash them anew together at her will
Through all her cycles—into man
more,

(As beetle or bird or fish, or opulent flower :
But till this cosmic order everywhere
Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day
Cracks all to pieces, — and that hour perhaps
Is not so far when momentary man
Shall seem no more a something to himself,
But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and
fanes,

And even his bones long laid within the grave,
The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,
Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,
Into the unseen forever, — till that hour,
My golden work in which I told a truth
That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,
And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake, and
plucks

The mortal soul from out immortal hell,
Shall stand : ay, surely : then it falls at
last

And perishes as I must : for O Thou,
Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,
Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,
Who fail to find thee, being as thou art
Without one pleasure and without one pain,
Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine
Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus
I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not
How roughly men may woo thee so they
win —

Thus — thus : the soul flies out and dies in the
air."

With that he drove the knife into his side :
She heard him raging, heard him fall ; ran
in,

Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon her-
self

As having fall'd in duty to him, shriek'd
That she but meant to win him back, fell on
him,

Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wall'd : he answer'd,
"Care not thou !

Thy duty ? What is duty ? Fare thee well !"

THE GOLDEN SUPPER.

[This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio.]

A young lover, Julian, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavors to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel of it. He speaks of having been haunted in delirium by visions and the sound of bells, sometimes tolling for a funeral and at last ringing for a marriage ; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the event, a witness to it completes the tale.]

His fate the event he leaves the event to
me ;

Poor Julian — now he rush'd away ; the
bells,

Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear and
heart —

But cast a parting glance at me, you saw,
As who should say "continue." Well, he
had

One golden hour — of triumph shall I say ?
Solace at least — before he left his home.

Would you had seen him in that hour of
his !

He moved thro' all of it majestically —
Restrain'd himself quite to the close — but
now —

Whether they were his lady's marriage-
bells,

Or prophets of them in his fantasy,
I never ask'd : but Lionel and the girl
Were wedded, and our Julian came again
Back to his mother's house among the pines.
But there, their gloom, the mountains and
the Bay,

The whole land weigh'd him down as Ætna
does

The Giant of Mythology : he would go,
Would leave the land forever, and had gone
Surely, but for a whisper "Go not yet,"
Some warning, and divinely as it seem'd
By that which follow'd — but of this I deem
As of the visions that he told — the event
Glanced back upon them in his after life,
And partly made them — tho' he knew it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not look at
her —

No not for months : but, when the eleventh
moon

After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,
Heard yet once more the tolling bell, and
said,

Would you could toll me out of life, but
found —

All softly as his mother broke it to him —
A crueler reason than a crazy ear,

For that low knell tolling his lady dead —
Dead — and had lain three days without a
pulse ;

All that look'd on her had pronounced her
dead.

And so they bore her (for in Julian's land
They never nail a dumb head up in elm),
Bore her free-faced to the free airs of heaven,
And laid her in the vault of her own —

What did he then ? not die : he is here and
hale —

Not plunge headforemost from the mountain
there,

And leave the name of Lover's Leap : not
he :

He knew the meaning of the whisper now,
Thought that he knew it. "This, I stay'd
for this ;

O love, I have not seen you for so long.
Now, now, will I go down into the grave,
I will be all alone, with all I love,
And kiss her on the lips. She is his no
more :

The dead returns to me, and I go down
To kiss the dead."

The fancy stirr'd him so
He rose and went, and entering the dim
vault,
And, making there a sudden light beheld
All round about him that which all will be.
The light was but a flash, and went again.
Then at the far end of the vault he saw
His lady with the moonlight on her face;
Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars
Of black and bands of silver, which the moon
Struck from an open grating overhead
High in the wall, and all the rest of her
Drown'd in the gloom and horror of the vault.

"It was my wish," he said, "to pass, to
sleep,
To rest, to be with her—till the great day
Peal'd on us with that music which rights all,
And raised us hand in hand." And kneeling
there
Down in the dreadful dust that once was man,
Dust, as he said, that once was loving hearts,
Hearts that had beat with such a love as
mine—
Not such as mine, no, nor for such as her—
He softly put his arm about her neck
And kiss'd her more than once, till helpless
death

And silence made him bold—nay, but I
wrong him,
He revered his dear lady even in death;
But, placing his true hand upon her heart,
"O, you warm heart," he moan'd, "not even
death
Can chill you all at once": then starting,
thought
His dreams had come again. "Do I wake or
sleep?

Or am I made immortal, or my love
Mortal once more?" It beat—the heart—
it beat:
Faint—but it beat: at which his own began
To pulse with such a vehemence that it
drown'd

The feeblér motion underneath his hand.
But when at last his doubts were satisfied,
He raised her softly from the sepulchre,
And, wrapping her all over with the cloak
He came in, and now striding fast, and now
Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore
Holding his golden burthen in his arms,
So bore her thro' the solitary land
Back to the mother's house where she was
born.

There the good mother's kindly minister-
ing,
With half a night's appliances, recall'd
Her fluttering life: she raised an eye that
ask'd
"Where?" till the things familiar to her youth
Had made a silent answer: then she spoke,
"Here I and how came I here?" and learning
it
(They told her somewhat rashly as I think)

At once began to wander and to wail,
"Ay, but you know that you must give me
back:

Send I bid him come"; but Lionel was away
Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none knew
where.

"He casts me out," she wept, "and goes"
—a wail

That seeming something, yet was nothing,
born

Not from believing mind, but shatter'd nerve,
Yet haunting Julian, as her own reproof
At some precipitance in her burial.

Then, when her own true spirit had return'd,
"O yes, and you," she said, "and none but
you.

For you have given me life and love again,
And none but you yourself shall tell him of it,
And you shall give me back when he returns."
"Stay then a little," answer'd Julian, "here,
And keep yourself, none knowing, to your-
self;

And I will do your will. I may not stay,
No, not an hour; but send me notice of him
When he returns, and then will I return,
And I will make a solemn offering of you
To him you love." And faintly she replied,
"And I will do your will, and none shall
know."

Not know? with such a secret to be known.
But all their house was old and loved them
both,
And all the house had known the loves of
both;

Had died almost to serve them any way,
And all the land was waste and solitary:
And then he rode away; but after this,
An hour or two, Camilla's travail came
Upon her, and that day a boy was born,
Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,
And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,
There fever seized upon him: myself was
then
Travelling that land, and meant to rest an
hour;

And sitting down to such a base repast,
It makes me angry yet to speak of it—
I heard a groaning overhead, and climb'd
The mould'ring stairs (for everything was vile)
And in a loft, with none to wait on him,
Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,
Raving of dead men's dust and beating
hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,
A flat malarian world of reed and rush!
But there from fever and my care of him
Sprang up a friendship that may help us yet.
For while we roam'd along the dreary coast,
And waited for her message, piece by piece
I learnt the drearier story of his life;
And, tho' he loved and honor'd Lionel,
Found that the sudden wail his lady made
Dwelt in his fancy: did he know her worth,
Her beauty even? should he not be taught,

Ev'n by the price that others set upon it,
The value of that jewel he had to guard?

Suddenly came her notice and we past,
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind, the
soul :
That makes the sequel pure ; tho' some of
us

Beginning at the sequel know no more.
Not such am I : and yet I say, the bird
That will not hear my call, however sweet,
But if my neighbor whistle answers him —
What matter? there are others in the wood.
Yet when I saw her (and I thought him
crazed,

Tho' not with such a craziness as needs
A cell and keeper), those dark eyes of hers —
Oh! such dark eyes I and not her eyes alone,
But all from those to where she touch'd on
earth,

For such a craziness as Julian's seem'd
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came
To greet us, her young hero in her arms!
"Kiss him," she said. "You gave me life
again.

He, but for you, had never seen it once.
His other father you! Kiss him, and then
Forgive him, if his name be Julian too."

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart! his
own
Sent such a flame into his face, I knew
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him there.

But he was all the more resolved to go,
And sent at once to Lionel, praying him
By that great love they both had borne the
dead,
To come and revel for one hour with him
Before he left the land forevermore;
And then to friends — they were not many —
who lived

Scatteringly about that lonely land of his,
And bade them to a banquet of farewells.

And Julian made a solemn feast; I never
Sat at a costlier; for all round his hall
From column on to column, as in a wood,
Not such as here — an equatorial one,
Great garlands swung and blossom'd; and
beneath,

Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of Art,
Chalice and salver, wines that, Heaven
knows when,

Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten sun,
And kept it thro' a hundred years of gloom,
Yet glowing in a heart of ruby — cups
Where nymph and god ran ever round in
gold —

Others of glass as costly — some with gems
Movable and resettable at will,
And trebling all the rest in value — Ah
heavens!

Why need I tell you all? — suffice to say

That whatsoever such a house as his,
And his was old, has in it rare or fair
Was brought before the guest: and they, the
guests,

Wonder'd at some strange light in Julian's
eyes

(I told you that he had his golden hour),
And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd
To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his,
And that resolved self-exile from a land
He never would revisit, such a feast
So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n than
rich,

But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the hall
Two great funeral curtains, looping down,
Parted a little ere they met the floor,
About a picture of his lady, taken
Some years before, and falling hid the frame.
And just above the parting was a lamp:
So the sweet figure folded round with night
Seem'd stepping out of darkness with a smile.

Well then — our solemn feast — we ate
and drank,
And might — the wines being of such
nobleness —

Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,
And something weird and wild about it all:
What was it? for our lover seldom spoke,
Scarce touch'd the meats; but ever and anon
A priceless goblet with a priceless wine
Arising, show'd he drank beyond his use;
And when the feast was near an end, he said:

"There is a custom in the Orient,
friends —

I read of it in Persia — when a man
Will honor those who feast with him, he
brings
And shows them whatsoever he accounts
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.
This custom —"

Pausing here a moment, all
The guests broke in upon him with meeting
hands
And cries about the banquet — "Beautiful!
Who could desire more beauty at a feast?"

The lover answer'd, "There is more than
one

Here sitting who desires it. Laud me not
Before my time, but hear me to the close.
This custom steps yet further when the guest
Is loved and honor'd to the uttermost.
For after he has shown him gems or gold,
He brings and sets before him in rich guise
That which is thrice as beautiful as these,
The beauty that is dearest to his heart —
'O my heart's lord, would I could show
you,' he says.

'Ev'n my heart too.' And I propose to-night
To show you what is dearest to my heart,
And my heart too.

"But solve me first a doubt.

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would I could show

And I propose to-night
dearest to my heart,
olve me first a doubt.

I knew a man, nor many years ago;
He had a faithful servant, one who loved
His master more than all on earth beside.
He falling sick, and seeming close on death,
His master would not wait until he died,
But bade his menials bear him from the door,
And leave him in the public way to die.
I knew another, not so long ago,
Who found the dying servant, took him
home,
And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved his
life.
I ask you now, should this first master claim
His service, whom does it belong to? him
Who thrust him out, or him who saved his
life?"

This question, so flung down before the
guests,
And balanced either way by each, at length
When some were doubtful how the law would
hold,
Was handed over by consent of all
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fairspeech was his, and delicate of phrase.
And he beginning languidly — his loss
Weight'd on him yet — but warming as he
went,
Glanced at the point of law, to pass it by,
Affirming that as long as either lived,
By all the laws of love and gratefulness,
The service of the one so saved was due
All to the saver — adding, with a smile,
The first for many weeks — a semi-smile
As at a strong conclusion — "body and soul
And life and limbs, all his to work his will."

Then Julian made a secret sign to me
To bring Camilla down before them all.
And crossing her own picture as she came,
And looking, as much lovelier as herself
Is lovelier than all others — on her head
A diamond circlet, and from under this
A veil, that seem'd no more than gilded air,
Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern gauze
With seeds of gold — so, with that grace of
hers,
Slow-moving as a wave against the wind,
That flings a mist behind it in the sun —
And bearing high in arms the mighty babe,
The younger Julian, who himself was crown'd
With roses, none so rosy as himself —
And over all her babe and her the jewels
Of many generations of his house
Sparkled and flash'd, for he had decked them
out

As for a solemn sacrifice of love —
So she came in: — I am long in telling it,
I never yet beheld a thing so strange,
Sad, sweet, and strange together — floated
in, —

While all the guests in mute amazement
rose, —
And slowly pacing to the middle hall,
Before the board, there paused and stood, her
breast
Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her feet,

Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.
But him she carried, him nor lights nor feast
Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men; who
cared
Only to use his own, and staring wide
And hungering for the gilt and jewell'd world
About him, look'd, as he is like to prove,
When Julian goes, the lord of all he saw.

"My guests," said Julian: "you are hon-
or'd now
Ev'n to the uttermost: in her behold
Of all my treasures the most beautiful,
Of all things upon earth the dearest to me."
Then waving us a sign to seat ourselves,
Led his dear lady to a chair of state.
And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face
Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again
Thrice in a second, felt him tremble too,
And heard him muttering, "So like, so like;
She never had a sister. I knew none.
Some cousin of his and hers — O God, so
like!"

And then he suddenly ask'd her if she were.
She shook, and cast her eyes down, and was
dumb.

And then some other question'd if she came
From foreign lands, and still she did not
speak.

Another, if the boy were hers: but she
To all their queries answer'd not a word,
Which made the amazement more, till one
of them
Said, shuddering, "Her spectre!" But his
friend

Replied, in half a whisper, "Not at least
The spectre that will speak if spoken to.
Terrible pity, if one so beautiful
Prove, as I almost dread to find her, dumb!"

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd all:
"She is but dumb, because in her you see
That faithful servant whom we spoke about,
Obedient to her second master now:
Which will not last. I have here to-night a
guest

So bound to me by common love and loss —
What! shall I bind him more? in his behalf,
Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him
That which of all things is the dearest to me,
Not only showing? and he himself pro-
nounced

That my rich gift is wholly mine to give.

"Now all be dumb, and promise all of you
Not to break in on what I say by word
Or whisper, while I show you all my heart."
And then began the story of his love
As here to-day, but not so wordily —
The passionate moment would not suffer
that —

Past thro' his visions to the burial; thence
Down to this last strange hour in his own
hall;

And then rose up, and with him all his guests
Once more as by enchantment; all but he,
Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell again,
And sat as in chains — to whom he said:

"Take my free gift, my cousin, for your
 wife;
 And were it only for the giver's sake,
 And tho' she seems so like the one you lost,
 Yet cast her not away so suddenly.
 Lest there be none left here to bring her
 back:
 I leave this land forever." Here he ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one hand,
 And bearing on one arm the noble babe,
 He slowly brought them both to Lionel.
 And there the widower husband and dead
 wife

Ruah'd each at each with a cry, that rather
 seem'd

For some new death than for a life renew'd;
 At this the very babe began to wail;

At once they turn'd, and caught and brought
 him in
 To their charm'd circle, and, half killing him
 With kisses, round him closed and claspt
 again.

But Lionel, when at last he freed himself
 From wife and child, and lifted up a face
 All over glowing with the sun of life,
 And love, and boundless thanks—the sight
 of this

So frighted our good friend, that turning to
 me

And saying, "It is over: let us go"—
 There were our horses ready at the doors—
 We bade them no farewell, but mounting
 these

He part forever from his native land;
 And I with him, my Julian, back to mine.

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ADDITIONAL POEMS.

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ADDITIONAL POEMS.

NOTE. — The Poems which follow include all those which have been omitted by the author from his latest revised editions, or never acknowledged by him. They are here printed, because, although unsanctioned by Mr. Tennyson, they have recently been collected from various sources, and printed in *America*.

TIMBUCTOO.*

"Deep in that lion-haunted inland lies
A mystic city, goal of high emprise."
CHAPMAN.

I stood upon the Mountain which o'er-
looks
The narrow seas, whose rapid interval
Parts Afric from green Europe, when the
Sun
Had fall'n below th' Atlantic, and above
The silent heavens were blench'd with faery
light,
Uncertain whether faery light or cloud,
Flowing Southward, and the chasms of deep,
deep blue
Slumber'd unfathomable, and the stars
Were flooded over with clear glory and pale.
I gazed upon the sheeny coast beyond,
There where the Giant of old Time infix'd
The limits of his prowess, pillars high
Long time erased from earth: even as the
Sea
When weary of wild inroad buildeth up
Huge mounds whereby to stay his yeasty
waves,
And mused I mused on legends quaint and
old
Which wilhoms won the hearts of all on
earth
Toward their brightness, ev'n as flame draws
air;
But had their being in the hearth of man
As air is th' life of flame: and thou wert then
A centred glory-circled memory,
Divinest Atalantis, whom the waves
Have buried deep, and thou of later name,
Imperial Eldorado, roof'd with gold:
Shadows to which, despite all shocks of change,
All on-set of capricious accident,
Men clung with yearning hope which would
not die.
As when in some great city where the walls
Shake, and the streets with ghastly faces
thronged,
Do utter forth a subterranean voice,

* A Poem which obtained the Chancellor's Medal
at the Cambridge Commencement, MDCCCXIX.
By A. TENNYSON, of Trinity College.

Among the inner columns far retired
At midnight, in the lone Acropolis,
Before the awful genius of the place
Kneels the pale Priestess in deep faith, the
while
Above her head the weak lamp dips and
winks
Unto the fearful summoning without:
Nathless she ever clasps the marble knees,
Bathes the cold hand with tears, and gazeth
on
Those eyes which wear no light but that
wherewith
Her fantasy informs them.

Where are ye,
Thrones of the Western wave, fair Islands
green?
Where are your moonlight halls, your cedarn
glooms,
The blossoming abysses of your hills?
Your flowering capes, and your gold-sanded
bays
Blown round with happy airs of odorous
winds?
Where are the infinite ways, which, seraph-
trod,
Wound through your great Elysian solitudes,
Whose lowest deeps were, as with visible
love,
Filled with Divine effulgence, circumfused,
Flowing between the clear and polished
stems,
And ever circling round their emerald cones
In coronals and glories, such as gird
The unfading foreheads of the Saints in
Heaven?
For nothing visible, they say, had birth
In that blest ground, but it was played about
With its peculiar glory. Then I raised
My voice and cried, "Wide Afric, doth thy
Sun
Lighten, thy hills enfold a city as fair
As those which starred the night o' the elder
world?
Or is the rumor of thy Timbuctoo
A dream as frail as those of ancient time?"
A curve of whitening, flashing, ebbing light!
A rustling of white wings! the bright de-
scent
Of a young Seraph! and he stood beside me

There on the ridge, and looked into my face
 With his unutterable, shining orbs,
 So that with hasty motion I did veil
 My vision with both hands, and saw before me
 Such colored spots as dance athwart the eyes
 Of those that gaze upon the noonday Sun.
 Girt with a zone of flashing gold beneath
 His breast, and compassed round about his
 brow

With triple arch of everchanging bows,
 And circled with the glory of living light
 And alternation of all hues, he stood.
 "O child of man, why muse you here alone

Upon the Mountain, on the dreams of old
 Which filled the earth with passing loveliness,
 Which flung strange music on the howling
 winds,

And odors rapt from remote Paradise?
 Thy sense is clogged with dull mortality:
 Open thine eyes and see."

I looked, but not
 Upon his face, for it was wonderful
 With its exceeding brightness, and the light
 Of the great Angel Mind which looked from
 out

The starry glowing of his restless eyes.
 I felt my soul grow mighty, and my spirit
 With supernatural excitation bound
 Within me, and my mental eye grew large
 With such a vast circumference of thought,
 That in my vanity I seemed to stand
 Upon the outward verge and bound alone
 Of full beatitude. Each failing sense,
 As with a momentary flash of light,
 Grew thrillingly distinct and keen. I saw
 The smallest grain that dappled the dark
 earth,

The indistinctest atom in deep air,
 The Moon's white cities, and the opal width
 Of her small glowing lakes, her silver heights
 Unvisited with dew of vagrant cloud,
 And the unsounded, undescended depth
 Of her black hollows. The clear galaxy
 Shorn of its hoary lustre, wonderful,
 Distinct and vivid with sharp points of light,
 Blaze within blaze, an unimagined depth
 And harmony of planet-girded suns
 And moon-encircled planets, wheel in wheel,
 Arched the wan sapphire. Nay—the hum
 of men,

Or other things talking in unknown tongues,
 And notes of busy life in distant worlds
 Beat like a far wave on my anxious ear,
 A maze of piercing, trackless, thrilling
 thoughts,

Involving and embracing each with each,
 Rapid as fire, inextricably linked,
 Expanding momentarily with every sight
 And sound which struck the palpitating sense,
 The issue of strong impulse, hurried through
 The riven rapt brain; as when in some large
 lake

From pressure of descendent crags, which
 lapse

Disjointed, crumbling from their parent slope
 At slender interval, the level calm

Is ridged with restless and increasing spheres
 Which break upon each other, each th' effect

Of separate impulse, but more fleet and
 strong

Than its precursor, till the eye in vain
 Amid the wild unrest of swimming shade
 Dappled with hollow and alternate rise
 Of interpenetrated arc, would scan
 Definite round.

I know not if I shape
 These things with accurate similitude
 From visible objects, for but dimly now,
 Less vivid than a half-forgotten dream,
 The memory of that mental excellence
 Comes o'er me, and it may be I entwine
 The indecision of my present mind
 With its past clearness, yet it seems to me
 As even then the torrent of quick thought
 Absorbed me from the nature of itself
 With its own fleetness. Where is he, that
 borne

Adown the sloping of an arrowy stream,
 Could link his shallop to the fleeting edge,
 And muse midway with philosophic calm
 Upon the wondrous laws which regulate
 The fierceness of the bounding element?

My thoughts which long had grovelled in
 the slime
 Of this dull world, like dusky worms which
 house

Beneath unshaken waters, but at once
 Upon some earth-awakening day of Spring
 Do pass from gloom to glory, and aloft
 Winnow the purple, bearing on both sides
 Double display of star-lit wings, which burn
 Fan-like and fibred with intensest bloom;
 Even so my thoughts erewhile so low, now
 felt

Unutterable buoyancy and strength
 To bear them upward through the trackless
 fields

Of undefined existence far and free.
 Then first within the South methought I
 saw

A wilderness of spires, and crystal pile
 Of rampart upon rampart, dome on dome,
 Illimitable range of battlement
 On battlement, and the Imperial height
 Of canopy o'ercanopied.

Behind
 In diamond light up spring the dazzling peaks
 Of Pyramids, as far surpassing earth's
 As heaven than earth is fairer. Each aloft
 Upon his narrowed eminence bore globes
 Of wheeling suns, or stars, or semblances
 Of either, showering circular abyss

Of radiance. But the glory of the place
 Stood out a pillared front of burnished gold,
 Interminably high, if gold it were

Or metal more ethereal, and beneath
 Two doors of blinding brilliance, where no
 gaze

Might rest, stood open, and the eye could
 scan,
 Through length of porch and valve and
 boundless hall,

Part of a throne of fiery flame, wherefrom
 The snowy skirting of a garment hung,
 And glimpse of multitude of multitudes
 That ministered around it—if I saw

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These things distinctly, for my human brain
Staggered beneath the vision, and thick night
Came down upon my eyelids, and I fell.

With ministering hand he raised me up :
Then with a mournful and ineffable smile,
Which but to look on for a moment filled
My eyes with irresistible sweet tears,
In accents of majestic melody,
Like a swoln river's gushings in still night

Mingled with floating music, thus he spake :
" There is no mightier Spirit than I to sway
The heart of man ; and teach him to attain
By shadowing forth the Unattainable ;
And step by step to scale that mighty stair
Whose landing-place is wrapt about with
clouds

Of glory of heaven.* With earliest light of
Spring,

And in the glow of fallow Summertide,
And in red Autumn when the winds are wild
With gambols, and when full-voiced Winter
roofs

The headland with inviolate white snow,
I play about his heart a thousand ways,
Visit his eyes with visions, and his ears
With harmonies of wind and wave and wood,

—Of winds which tell of waters, and of waters
Betraying the close kisses of the wind —
And win him unto me : and few there be

So gross of heart who have not felt and known
A higher than they see : they with dim eyes
Behold me darkling. Lo ! I have given thee

To understand my presence, and to feel
My fulness : I have filled thy lips with power.
I have raised thee nigher to the spheres of
heaven,

Man's first, last home : and thou with rav-
ished sense

* " Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven
is perfect."

Listenest the lordly music flowing from
The illimitable years. I am the Spirit,
The permeating life which courseth through
All th' intricate and labyrinthine veins
Of the great vine of Fable, which, outspread
With growth of shadowing leaf and clusters
rare,

Reacheth to every corner under heaven,
Deep-rooted in the living soil of truth ;
So that men's hopes and fears take refuge in
The fragrance of its complicated glooms,
And cool impeached twilights. Child of man,
Seest thou yon river, whose translucent wave,
Forth issuing from the darkness, windeth
through

The argent streets o' the city, imaging
The soft inversion of her tremulous domes,
Her gardens frequent with the stately palm
Her pagods hung with music of sweet bells,
Her obelisks of ranged chrysolite,
Minarets and towers ? Lo ! how he passeth
by,

And gulfs himself in sands, as not enduring
To carry through the world those waves, which
bore

The reflex of my city in their depth.

O city ! O latest throne ! where I was raised
To be a mystery of loveliness

Unto all eyes, the time is wellnigh come
When I must render up this glorious home
To keen Discovery ; soon yon brilliant towers
Shall darken with the waving of her wand ;

Darken and shrink and shiver into huts,
Black specks amid a waste of dreary sand,
Low-built, mud-walled, barbarian settlements.

How changed from this fair city !

Thus far the Spirit :
Then parted heavenward on the wing : and I
Was left alone on Calpe, and the moon
Had fallen from the night, and all was dark !

POEMS PUBLISHED IN THE EDITION OF 1830, AND OMITTED IN LATER EDITIONS.

ELEGIACS.

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming the broad
valley dimmed in the gloaming :

Thro' the black-stemmed pines only the far
river shines.

Creeping through blossomy rushes and bow-
ers of rose-blowing bushes,

Down by the poplartall rivulets babble and fall.
Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerily ; the grass-
hopper carollethe clearly :

Deeply the turtle cooes ; shrilly the owl
halloos ;

Winds creep ; dew falls chilly : in her first
sleep earth breathes stilly :

Over the pools in the burn watergnats mur-
mur and mourn.

Sadly the far kine loweth : the glimmering
water outfloweth :

Twin peaks shadowed with pine slope to the
dark hyaline.

Low-throned Hesper is stayéd between the
two peaks ; but the Naiad

Throbbing in wild unrest holds him beneath
in her breast.

The ancient poetess singeth that Hesperus
all things bringeth,

Smoother the wearied mind : bring me my
love, Rosalind.

Thou comest morning and even ; she cometh
not morning or even.

False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my
sweet Rosalind ?

THE "HOW" AND THE "WHY."

?

I AM any man's sutor,
If any will be my tutor:
Some say this life is pleasant,
Some think it speedeth fast,
In time there is no present,
In eternity no future,
In eternity no past.

We laugh, we cry, we are born, we die,
Who will riddle me the *how* and the *why*?

The bulrush nods unto its brother.
The wheatears whisper to each other:
What is it they say? what do they there?
Why two and two make four? why round is
not square?

Why the rock stands still, and the light
clouds fly?

Why the heavy oak groans, and the white
willows sigh?

Why deep is not high, and high is not deep?

Whether we wake or whether we sleep?
Whether we sleep, or whether we die?

How you are you? why I am I?
Who will riddle me the *how* and the *why*?

The world is somewhat; it goes on somehow:
But what is the meaning of *then* and *now*?

I feel there is something; but how and
what?

I know there is somewhat: but what and
why?

I cannot tell if that somewhat be I.

The little bird pipeth—"why? why?"

In the summer woods when the sun falls low,
And the great bird sits on the opposite bough,
And stares in his face and shouts "how?
how?"

And the black owl scuds down the mellow
twilight,

And chants "how? how?" the whole of the
night.

Why the life goes out when the blood is spilt?
What the life is? where the soul may lie?

Why a church is with a steeple built:
And a house with a chimney-pot?

Who will riddle me the *how* and the *what*?
Who will riddle me the *what* and the *why*?

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND NOT
IN UNITY WITH ITSELF.

O God! my God! have mercy now.
I faint, I fall. Men say that thou
Didst die for me, for such as *me*,
Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,
And that my sin was as a thorn
Among the thorns that girt thy brow,
Wounding thy soul.—That even now,
In this extremest misery
Of ignorance, I should require

A sign! and if a bolt of fire
Would rive the slumberous summer noon
While I do pray to thee alone,
Think my belief would stronger grow!
Is not my human pride brought low?
The boastings of my spirit still?
The joy I had in my free will
All cold, and dead, and corpse-like grown?
And what is left to me, but thou,
And faith in thee? Men pass me by;
Christians with happy countenances—
And children all seem full of thee!
And women smile with saintlike glances
Like thine own mother's when she bowed
Above thee, on that happy morn
When angels spake to me, aloud,
And thou and peace to earth were born.
Goodwill to me as well as all—
—I one of them: my brothers they:
Brothers in Christ—a world of peace
And confidence, day after day;
And trust and hope till things should cease,
And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith!
To hold a common scorn of death!
And at a burial to hear

The creaking cords which wound and eat
Into my human heart, whence'er

Earth goes to earth, with grief, not fear,
With hopeful grief, were passing sweet!

A grief not uninformed, and dull,
Hearted with hope, of hope as full

As is the blood with life, or night
And a dark cloud with rich moonlight.

To stand beside a grave, and see
The red small atoms, wherewith we

Are built, and smile in calm, and say—
"These little motes and grains shall be
Clothed on with immortality
More glorious than the noon of day.

All that is pass'd into the flowers,
And into beasts and other men,

And all the Norland whirlwind showers
From open vaults, and all the sea

O'erwashes with sharp salts, again
Shall fleet together all, and be
Indued with immortality."

Thrice happy state again to be
The trustful infant on the knee!

Who lets his waxen fingers play
About his mother's neck, and knows

Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.
They comfort him by night and day,
They light his little life away;

He hath no thought of coming woes;
He hath no care of life or death,

Scarce outward signs of joy arise,
Because the Spirit of happiness

And perfect rest so inward is;
And loveth so his innocent heart,

Her temple and her place of birth,
Where she would ever wish to dwell,

Life of the fountain there, beneath
Its salient springs, and far apart,

Hating to wander out on earth,
Or breathe into the hollow air,

of fire
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 air,

Whose chillness would make visible
 Her subtle, warm, and golden breath,
 Which mixing with the infant's blood,
 Full fills him with beatitude.
 Oh! sure it is a special care
 Of God, to fortify from doubt,
 To arm in proof, and guard about
 With triple mailed trust, and clear
 Delight, the infant's dawning year.
 Would that my gilded fancy were
 As thine, my mother, when with brows
 Propped on thy knees, my hands upheld
 In thine, I listened to thy vows,
 For me outpoured in holiest prayer —
 For me unworthy! — and beheld
 The mild deep eyes upraised, that knew
 The beauty and repose of faith,
 And the clear spirit shining through.
 Oh! wherefore do we grow awry
 From roots which strike so deep? why dare
 Paths in the desert? Could not I
 Bow myself down, where thou hast knelt,
 To th' earth — until the ice would melt
 Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?
 What Devil had the heart to scathe
 Flowers thou hadst reared — to brush the dew
 From thine own lily, when thy grave
 Was deep, my mother, in the clay?
 Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I
 So little love for thee? But why
 Prevailed not thy pure prayers? Why pre-
 To one who heeds not, who can save
 But will not? Great in faith, and strong
 Against the grief of circumstance
 Wert thou, and yet unheard? What if
 Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive
 Through utter dark a full-sailed skiff,
 Unpiloted! it the echoing dance
 Of rebound whirlwinds, stooping low
 Unto the death, not sunk! I know
 At matins and at evensong,
 That thou, if thou wert yet alive,
 In deep and daily prayers wouldst strive
 To reconcile me with thy God.
 Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold
 At heart, thou wouldstst murmur still —
 "Bring this lamb back into thy fold,
 My Lord, if so it be thy will."
 Wouldst tell me I must brook the rod,
 And chastisement of human pride;
 That pride, the sin of devils, stood
 Betwixt me and the light of God!
 That hitherto I had defied,
 And had rejected God — that Grace
 Would drop from his o'erbrimming love,
 As manna on my wilderness,
 If I would pray — that God would move
 And strike the hard, hard rock, and thence,
 Sweet in their utmost bitterness,
 Would issue tears of penitence
 Which would keep green hope's life. Alas!
 I think that pride hath now no place
 Or sojourn in me. I am void,
 Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then? Why not yet
 Anchor thy frailty there, where man
 Hath moored and rested? Ask the sea

At midnight, when the crisp slope waves
 After a tempest, rib and fret
 The broad-imbas'd beach, why he
 Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?
 Wherefore his ridges are not curls
 And ripples of an inland meer?
 Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can
 Draw down into his vexed pools
 All that blue heaven which hues and paves
 The ether? I am too forlorn,
 Too shaken: my own weakness fools
 My judgment, and my spirit whirls,
 Moved from beneath with doubt and fear.

"Yet," said I, in my morn of youth,
 The unsunned freshness of my strength,
 When I went forth in quest of truth,
 "It is man's privilege to doubt,
 If so be that from doubt at length,
 Truth may stand forth unmoved of change,
 An image with profulgent brows,
 And perfect limbs, as from the storm
 Of running fires and fluid range
 Of lawless airs at last stood out
 This excellence and solid form
 Of constant beauty. For the Ox
 Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills
 The horned valleys all about,
 And hollows of the fringed hills
 In summerheats, with placid lows
 Unfearing, till his own blood flows
 About his hoof. And in the flocks
 The lamb rejoiceth in the year,
 And raceth freely with his fere,
 And answers to his mother's calls
 From the flowered furrow. In a time,
 Of which he wots not, run short pains
 Through his warm heart: and then, from
 whence

He knows not, on his light there falls
 A shadow; and his native slope
 Where he was wont to leap and climb,
 Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,
 And something in the darkness draws
 His forehead earthward, and he dies.
 Shall men live thus, in joy and hope
 As a young lamb, who cannot dream,
 Living, but that he shall live on?
 Shall we not look into the laws
 Of life and death, and things that seem,
 And things that be, and analyze
 Our double nature, and compare
 All creeds till we have found the one,
 If one there be?" Ay me! I fear
 All may not doubt, but everywhere
 Some must clasp idols. Yet, my God,
 Whom call I idol? Let thy dove
 Shadow me over, and my sins
 Be unremembered, and thy love
 Enlighten me. O teach me yet
 Somewhat before the heavy clod
 Weighs on me, and the busy fret
 Of that sharp-headed worm begins
 In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life! O weary death!
 O spirit and heart made desolate!
 O damned vacillating state!

THE BURIAL OF LOVE.

His eyes in eclipse,
Pale-cold his lips,
The light of his hopes unfed,
Mute his tongue,
His bow unstrung
With the tears he hath shed,
Backward drooping his graceful head,
Love is dead :
His last arrow is sped ;
He hath not another dart ;
Go — carry him to his dark deathbed ;
Bury him in the cold, cold heart —
Love is dead.

O truest love ! art thou forlorn,
And unrevenged ? thy pleasant wiles
Forgotten, and thine innocent joy ?
Shall hollow-hearted apathy,
The cruellest form of perfect scorn,
With languor of most hateful smiles,
For ever write,
In the withered light
Of the tearless eye,
An epitaph that all may spy ?
No ! sooner she herself shall die.

For her the showers shall not fall,
Nor the round sun shine that shineth to all ;
Her light shall into darkness change ;
For her the green grass shall not spring,
Nor the rivers flow, nor the sweet birds sing,
Till Love have his full revenge.

TO —

SAINTED Juliet ! dearest name !

If to love be life alone,
Divinest Juliet,

I love thee, and live ; and yet
Love unreturned is like the fragrant flame
Folding the slaughter of the sacrifice
Offered to gods upon an altar-throne ;
My heart is lighted at thine eyes,
Changed into fire, and blown about with sighs.

SONG.

I.

I' THE glooming light
Of middle night
So cold and white,
Worn Sorrow sits by the moaning wave,
Beside her are laid
Her mattock and spade,
For she hath half delved her own deep grave.
Alone she is there :
The white clouds drizzle : her hair falls loose :
Her shoulders are bare ;
Her tears are mixed with the beaded dews.

II.

Death standeth by ;
She will not die ;
With glazed eye
She looks at her grave : she cannot sleep ;
Ever alone
She maketh her moan :
She cannot speak : she can only weep,
For she will not hope.
The thick snow falls on her lake by flake,
The dull wave mourns down the
slope,
The world will not change, and her heart will
not break.

SONG.

I.

THE lintwhite and the throtestock
Have voices sweet and clear ;
All in the bloomed May.
They from the bloomy brere
Call to the fleeting year,
If that he would them hear
And stay.
Alas ! that one so beautiful
Should have so dull an ear !

II.

Fair year, fair year, thy children call,
But thou art deaf as death ;
All in the bloomed May.
When thy light perisheth
That from thee issueth,
Our life evanisheth :
O, stay !
Alas ! that lips so cruel-dumb
Should have so sweet a breath !

III.

Fair year, with brows of royal love
Thou comest, as a king,
All in the bloomed May.
Thy golden largess fling,
And longer hear us sing ;
Though thou art fleet of wing,
Yet stay.
Alas ! that eyes so full of light
Should be so wandering !

IV.

Thy locks are all of sunny sheen
In rings of gold yronne,*
All in the bloomed May.
We pri'thee pass not on ;
If thou dost leave the sun,
Delight is with thee gone.
O, stay !
Thou art the fairest of thy feres,
We pri'thee pass not on.

* " His crispè hair in rings was yronne."
CHAUCER, *Knights Tale*.

WHEN

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Knights Tale,

SONG.—NOTHING WILL DIE.—ALL THINGS WILL DIE. 237

SONG.

I.

EVERY day hath its night;
Every night its morn;
Thorough dark and bright
Winged hours are borne;
Ah! welaway!
Seasons flower and fade;
Golden calm and storm
Mingle day by day.
There is no bright form
Doth not cast a shade—
Ah! welaway!

II.

When we laugh, and our mirth
Apes the happy vein,
We're so kin to earth,
Pleasance fathers pain—
Ah! welaway!
Madness laugheth loud;
Laughter bringeth tears;
Eyes are worn away
Till the end of fears
Cometh in the shroud,
Ah! welaway!

III.

All is change, woe or weal;
Joy is Sorrow's brother;
Grief and gladness steal
Symbols of each other;
Ah! welaway!
Larks in heaven's cope
Sing: the culvers mourn
All the livelong day.
Be not all forlorn:
Let us weep in hope—
Ah! welaway!

NOTHING WILL DIE.

WHEN will the stream be aweary of flowing
Under my eye?
When will the wind be aweary of blowing
Over the sky?
When will the clouds be aweary of fleeting?
When will the heart be aweary of beating?
And nature die?
Never, O never! nothing will die;
The stream flows,
The wind blows,
The cloud fleets,
The heart beats,
Nothing will die.

Nothing will die;
All things will change
Through eternity.

'Tis the world's winter;
Autumn and summer
Are gone long ago.
Earth is dry to the centre,
But spring a new comer—

A spring rich and strange,
Shall make the winds blow
Round and round,
Through and through,
Here and there,
Till the air
And the ground
Shall be filled with life anew.
The world was never made;
It will change, but it will not fade.
So let the wind range;
For even and morn
Ever will be
Through eternity.
Nothing was born;
Nothing will die;
All things will change.

ALL THINGS WILL DIE.

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its flowing
Under my eye;
Warmly and broadly the south winds are
blowing
Over the sky.
One after another the white clouds are fleet-
ing;
Every heart this May morning in joyance is
beating
Full merrily;
Yet all things must die.
The stream will cease to flow;
The wind will cease to blow;
The clouds will cease to fleet;
The heart will cease to beat;
For all things must die.

All things must die.
Spring will come nevermore. * *
O, vanity!
Death waits at the door.
See! our friends are all forsaking
The wine and merrymaking.
We are called—we must go.
Laid low, very low,
In the dark we must lie.
The merry glees are still;
The voice of the bird
Shall no more be heard,
Nor the wind on the hill.
O, misery!
Hark! death is calling
While I speak to ye,
The jaw is falling,
The red cheek paling,
The strong limbs failing;
Ice with the warm blood mixing;
The eyeballs fixing.
Nine times goes the passing bell
Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth
Had a birth,
As all men know
Long ago.
And the old earth must die,

So let the warm winds range,
And the blue wave beat the shore ;
For even and morn
Ye will never see
Through eternity.
All things were born.
Ye will come nevermore,
For all things must die.

HERO TO LEANDER.

O go not yet, my love !
The night is dark and vast ;
The white moon is hid in her heaven above,
And the waves climb high and fast.
O, kiss me, kiss me, once again,
Lest thy kiss should be the last !
O kiss me ere we part ;
Grow closer to my heart !
My heart is warmer surely than the bosom
of the main.
O joy ! O bliss of blisses !
My heart of hearts art thou.
Come bathe me with thy kisses,
My eyelids and my brow.
Hark how the wild rain hisses,
And the loud sea roars below.

Thy heart beats through thy rosy limbs,
So gladly doth it stir ;
Thine eye in drops of gladness swims.
I have bathed thee with the pleasant
myrrh :
Thy locks are dripping balm ;
Thou shalt not wander hence to-night,
I'll stay thee with my kisses.
To-night the roaring brine
Will rend thy golden tresses ;
The ocean with the morrow light
Will be both blue and calm ;
And the billow will embrace thee with a kiss
as soft as mine.

No Western odors wander
On the black and moaning sea,
And when thou art dead, Leander
My soul must follow thee !
O go not yet, my love !
Thy voice is sweet and low ;
The deep salt wave breaks in above
Those marble steps below.
The turret-stairs are wet
That lead into the sea.
Leander ! go not yet.
The pleasant stars have set :
O, go not, go not yet,
Or I will follow thee !

THE MYSTIC.

ANGELS have talked with him, and showed
him thrones ;
Ye knew him not ; he was not one of ye,
Ye scorned him with an undiscerning scorn :
Ye could not read the marvel in his eye,

The still serene abstraction ; he hath felt
The vanities of after and before ;
Albeit, his spirit and his secret heart
The stern experiences of converse lives,
The linked woes of many a fiery change
Had purified, and chastened, and made free.
Always there stood before him, night and day,
Of wayward vary-colored circumstance
The imperishable presences serene,
Colossal, without form, or sense, or sound,
Dim shadows but unwaning presences
Fourfaced to four corners of the sky :
And yet again, three shadows, fronting one,
One forward, one respectful, three but one ;
And yet again, again and evermore,
For the two first were not, but only seemed,
One shadow in the midst of a great light,
One reflex from eternity on time,
One mighty countenance of perfect calm,
Awful with most invariable eyes.

For him the silent congregated hours,
Daughters of time, divinely tall, beneath
Severe and youthful brows, with shining eyes
Smiling a godlike smile (the innocent light
Of earliest youth pierced through and through
with all

Keen knowledges of low-embowed eld)
Upheld, and ever hold aloft the cloud
Which droops low-hung on either gate of life,
Both birth and death : he in the centre fixt,
Saw far on each side through the grated gates
Most pale and clear and lovely distances.
He often lying broad awake, and yet
Remaining from the body, and apart
In intellect and power and will, hath heard
Time flowing in the middle of the night,
And all things creeping to a day of doom.
How could ye know him ? Ye were yet within
The narrower circle : he had wellnigh reached
The last, which with a region of white flame,
Pure without heat, into a larger air
Upburning, and an ether of black blue,
Investeth and ingirds all other lives.

THE GRASSHOPPER.

I.

VOICE of the summer wind,
Joy of the summer plain,
Life of the summer hours,
Carol clearly, bound along.
No Tithon thou as poets feign
(Shame fall 'em they are deaf and blind),
But an insect lithe and strong,
Bowing the seeded summer flowers.
Prove their falsehood and thy quarrel,
Vaulting on thine airy feet.
Clap thy shielded sides and carol,
Carol clearly, chirrup sweet.
Thou art a mailed warrior in youth and
strength complete ;
Armed cap-a-pie
Full fair to see ;
Unknowing fear,
Undreading loss,

GRASSHOPPER.

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SHOPPER.

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LOVE, PRIDE, AND FORGETFULNESS. — LOVE AND SORROW. 289

A gallant cavalier,
Sans peur et sans reproche,
In sunlight and in shadow,
The Bayard of the meadow.

II.

I would dwell with thee,
Merry grasshopper,
Thou art so glad and free,
And as light as air ;
Thou hast no sorrow or tears,
Thou hast no compt of years,
No withered immortality,
But a short youth sunny and free.

Carol clearly, bound along,
Soon thy joy is over,
A summer of loud song,
And slumbers in the clover.
What hast thou to do with evil
In thine hour of love and revel,
In thy heat of summer pride,
Pushing the thick roots aside
Of the singing flower'd grasses,
That brush thee with their silken tresses?
What hast thou to do with evil,
Shooting, singing, ever springing
In and out the emerald glooms,
Ever leaping, ever singing,
Lighting on the golden blooms?

LOVE, PRIDE, AND FORGETFULNESS.

ERE yet my heart was sweet Love's tomb,
Love labored honey busily.
I was the hive, and Love the bee,
My heart the honeycomb.
One very dark and chilly night
Pride came beneath and held a light.

The cruel vapors went through all,
Sweet Love was withered in his cell :
Pride took Love's sweets, and by a spell
Did change them into gall ;
And Memory, though fed by Pride,
Did wax so thin on gall,
Awhile she scarcely lived at all.
What marvel that she died?

CHORUS

IN AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA, WRITTEN
VERY EARLY.

THE varied earth, the moving heaven,
The rapid waste of roving sea,
The fountain-pregnant mountains riven
To shapes of wildest anarchy,
By secret fire and midnight storms
That wander round their windy cones,
The subtle life, the countless forms
Of living things, the wondrous tones
Of man and beast are full of strange
Astonishment and boundless change.

The day, the diamonded night,
The echo, feeble child of sound,
The heavy thunder's griding might,
The herald lightning's starry bound,
The vocal spring of bursting bloom,
The naked summer's glowing birth,
The troublous autumn's fallow gloom,
The hoarhead winter paving earth
With sheeny white, are full of strange
Astonishment and boundless change.

Each sun which from the centre flings
Grand music and redundant fire,
The burning belts, the mighty rings,
The murmurous planets' rolling choir,
The globe-filled arch that, cleaving air,
Lost in its own effulgence sleeps,
The lawless comets as they glare
And thunder through the sapphire deeps
In wayward strength, and full of strange
Astonishment and boundless change.

LOST HOPE.

You cast to ground the hope which once was
mine ;
But did the while your harsh decree deplore,
Embalming with sweet tears the vacant shrine,
My heart, where Hope had been and was
no more.

So on an oaken sprout
A goodly acorn grew ;
But winds from heaven shook the acorn out,
And filled the cup with dew.

THE TEARS OF HEAVEN.

HEAVEN weeps above the earth all night till
morn,
In darkness weeps as all ashamed to weep,
Because the earth hath made her state forlorn
With self-wrought evil of unnumbered years,
And doth the fruit of her dishonor reap.
And all the day heaven gathers back her
tears,
Into her own blue eyes so clear and deep,
And showering down the glory of lightsome
day,
Smiles on the earth's worn brow to win her
if she may.

LOVE AND SORROW.

O MAIDEN, fresher than the first green leaf
With which the fearful springtide flecks the
lea,
Weep not, Almeida, that I said to thee
That thou hast half my heart, for bitter grief
Doth hold the other half in sovereignty.
Thou art my heart's sun in love's crystalline :
Yet on both sides at once thou canst not
shine :

Thine is the bright side of my heart, and
thine
My heart's day, but the shadow of my heart;
Issue of its own substance, my heart's night
Thou canst not lighten even with *thy* light,
All-powerful in beauty as thou art.
Almeida, if my heart were substanceless,
Then might thy rays pass through to the
other side,
So swiftly, that they nowhere would abide,
But lose themselves in utter emptiness.
Half-light, half-shadow, let my spirit sleep;
They never learned to love who never knew
to weep.

TO A LADY SLEEPING.

O THOU whose fringed lids I gaze upon,
Through whose dim brain the winged dreams
are borne,
Unroof the shrines of clearest vision,
In honor of the silver-flecked morn;
Long hath the white wave of the virgin light
Driven back the billow of the dreamful dark.
Thou all unwittingly prolongest night,
Though long ago listening the poised lark,
With eyes dropt downward through the blue
serene,
Over heaven's parapet the angels lean.

SONNET.

COULD I outwear my present state of woe
With one brief winter, and induce the spring
Hues of fresh youth, and mightily outgrow
The wan dark coil of faded suffering —
Forth in the pride of beauty issuing
A sheeny snake, the light of vernal bowers,
Moving his crest to all sweet plots of flowers
And watered valleys where the young birds
sing;
Could I thus hope my lost delight's renewing,
I straightly would command the tears to creep
From my charged lids; but inwardly I weep;
Some vital heat as yet my heart is wooing;
That to itself hath drawn the frozen rain
From my cold eyes, and melted it again.

SONNET.

THOUGH Night hath climbed her peak of
highest noon,
And bitter blasts the screaming autumn whirl,
All night through archways of the bridged
pearl,
And portals of pure silver, walks the moon.
Walk on, my soul, nor crouch to agony,
Turn cloud to light, and bitterness to joy,
And dress to gold with glorious alchemy,
Basing thy throne above the world's annoy.
Reign thou above the storms of sorrow and
ruth

That roar beneath; unshaken peace hath
won thee;
So shalt thou pierce the woven glooms of
truth;
So shall the blessing of the meek be on thee;
So in thine hour of dawn, the body's youth,
An honorable eld shall come upon thee.

SONNET.

SHALL the hag Evil die with child of Good,
Or propagate again her loathéd kind,
Thronging the cells of the diseased mind,
Hateful with hanging cheeks, a withered
brood,
Though hourly pastured on the salient blood?
O that the wind which bloweth cold or heat
Would shatter and o'erbear the brazen beat
Of their broad vans, and in the solitude
Of middle space confound them, and blow
back
Their wild cries down their cavern throats,
and slake
With points of blast-borne hail their heated
eyne!
So their wan limbs no more might come
between
The moon and the moon's reflex in the night,
Nor blot with floating shades the solar light.

SONNET.

THE pallid thunder-stricken sigh for gain,
Down an ideal stream they ever float,
And sailing on Pactolus in a boat,
Drown soul and sense, while wistfully they
strain
Weak eyes upon the glistening sands that
robe
The understream. The wise, could he be-
hold
Cathedral caverns of thick-ribbed gold
And branching silvers of the central globe,
Would marvel from so beautiful a sight
How scorn and ruin, pain and hate could
flow:
But Hatred in a gold cave sits below;
Pleached with her hair, in mail of argent
light
Shot into gold, a snake her forehead clips,
And skins the color from her trembling lips.

LOVE.

I.

THOU, from the first, unborn, undying love,
Albeit we gaze not on thy glories near,
Before the face of God didst breathe and
move,
Though night and pain and ruin and death
reign here.

unshaken peace hath
the woven glooms of
the meek be on thee ;
w, the body's youth,
come upon thee.

NET.

e with child of Good,
loathed kind,
the diseased mind,
cheeks, a withered
d on the salient blood?
bloweth cold or heat
bear the brazen beat
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shades the solar light.

ET.

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ve sits below ;
, in mail of argent

her forehead clips,
her trembling lips.

E.

orn, undying love,
y glories near,
didst breathe and
and ruin and death

THE KRAKEN.—ENGLISH WAR-SONG.—NATIONAL SONG. 291

Thou foldest, like a golden atmosphere,
The very throne of the eternal God :
Passing through thee the edicts of his fear
Are mellowed into music, borne abroad
By the loud winds, though they uprend the
sea,
Even from its central deeps : thine empery
Is over all ; thou wilt not brook eclipse ;
Thou goest and returnest to His lips
Like lightning : thou dost ever brood above
The silence of all hearts, unutterable Love.

II.

To know thee is all wisdom, and old age
Is but to know thee : dimly we behold thee
Athwart the veils of evils which infold thee.
We beat upon our aching hearts in rage ;
We cry for thee ; we deem the world thy
tomb.
As dwellers in lone planets look upon
The mighty disk of their majestic sun,
Hollowed in awful chasms of wheeling gloom,
Making their day dim, so we gaze on thee.
Come, thou of many crowns, white-robed love,
Oh ! rend the veil in twain : all men adore
thee ;
Heaven crieth after thee ; earth waiteth for
thee ;
Breathe on thy winged throne, and it shall
move
In music and in light o'er land and sea.

III.

And now — methinks I gaze upon thee now,
As on a serpent in his agonies
Awe-stricken Indians ; what time laid low
And crushing the thick fragrant reeds he lies,
When the new year warm-breathed on the
Earth,
Waiting to light him with her purple skies,
Calls to him by the fountain to uprise.
Already with the pangs of a new birth
Strain in his writhings awful hues begin
And in his hot spheres of his convulsed eyes,
To wander down his sable-sheeny sides,
Like light on troubled waters : from within
Anon he rusheth forth with merry din,
And in him light and joy and strength abides ;
And from his brows a crown of living light
Looks through the thick-stemmed woods by
day and night.

THE KRAKEN.

BELOW the thunders of the upper deep ;
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep,
The Kraken sleepeth : faintest sunlights flee
About his shadowy sides : above him swell
Huge sponges of millennial growth and
height ;
And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
Unnumbered and enormous polyp
Winnow with giant fins the slumbering green.

There hath he lain for ages and will lie
Battening upon huge seaworms in his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep ;
Then once by man and angels to be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

ENGLISH WAR-SONG.

Who fears to die ? Who fears to die ?
Is there any here who fears to die ?
He shall find what he fears ; and none shall
grieve
For the man who fears to die ;
But the withering scorn of the many shall
cleave
To the man who fears to die.

CHORUS.

Shout for England !
Ho ! for England !
George for England !
Merry England !
England for aye !

The hollow at heart shall crouch forlorn,
He shall eat the bread of common scorn ;
It shall be steeped in the salt, salt tear,
Shall be steeped in his own salt tear :
Far better, far better he never were born
Than to shame merry England here.

Cho. — Shout for England ! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy ;
Hark ! he shouteth — the ancient enemy !
On the ridge of the hill his banners rise ;
They stream like fire in the skies ;
Hold up the Lion of England on high
Till it dazzle and blind his eyes.

Cho. — Shout for England ! etc.

Come along ! we alone of the earth are free ;
The child in our cradles is bolder than he ;
For where is the heart and strength of slaves ?
Oh ! where is the strength of slaves ?
He is weak ! we are strong : he a slave, we
are free ;

Come along ! we will dig their graves.

Cho. — Shout for England ! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy ;
Will he dare to battle with the free ?
Spur along ! spur again ! charge to the fight !
Charge ! charge to the fight !
Hold up the Lion of England on high !
Shout for God and our right !

Cho. — Shout for England ! etc.

NATIONAL SONG.

THERE is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no hearts like English hearts,
Such hearts of oak as they be.

There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no men like Englishmen,
So tall and bold as they be.

CHORUS.

For the French the Pope may shrive 'em,
For the devil a whit we heed 'em :
As for the French, God speed 'em
Unto their heart's desire,
And the merry devil drive 'em
Through the water and the fire.

FULL CHORUS.

Our glory is our freedom,
We lord it o'er the sea ;
We are the sons of freedom,
We are free.

There is no land like England,
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no wives like English wives,
So fair and chaste as they be.
There is no land like England,
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no maids like English maids,
So beautiful as they be.

CHO.—For the French, etc.

DUALISMS.

Two bees within a crystal flowerbell rockéd,
Hum a lodelay to the west-wind at noon-
tide.

Both alike, they buzz together,
Both alike, they hum together,
Through and through the flowered
heather.

Where in a creeping cove the wave unshockéd
Lays itself calm and wide.

Over a stream two birds of glancing
feather

Do woo each other, catolling together.
Both alike, they glide together,
Side by side ;

Both alike, they sing together,
Arching blue-glosséd necks beneath the pur-
ple weather.

Two children lovelier than Love adown the
lea are singing,

As they gambol, lily-garlands ever stringing :
Both inblossom white silk are frockéd :

Like, unlike, they roam together
Under a summer vault of golden weather :
Like, unlike, they sing together
Side by side,

MidMay's darling golden lockéd.
Summer's tanling diamond eyed.

WE ARE FREE.

The winds, as at their hour of birth,
Leaning upon the wingéd sea,

Breathed low around the rolling earth
With mellow preludes, "We are free."
The streams through many a lilled row
Down-carolling to the crisped sea,
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
Atween the blossoms, "We are free."

THE SEA FAIRIES.*

Slow sailed the weary mariners, and saw
Between the green brink and the running
foam

White limbs unrobéd in a crystal air,
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest
To little harps of gold : and while they mused,
Whispering to each other half in fear,
Shrill music reached them on the middle sea.

SONG.

Whither away, whither away, whither
away? Fly no more ;
Whither away wi' the singing sail? whith-
er away wi' the oar?
Whither away from the high green field and
the happy blossoming shore?
Weary mariners, hither away,
One and all, one and all,
Weary mariners, come and play ;
We will sing to you all the day ;
Furl the sail and the foam will fall
From the prow ! One and all
Furl the sail ! Drop the oar !

Leap ashore,
Know danger and trouble and toil no more.
Whither away wi' the sail and the oar?
Drop the oar,
Leap ashore,
Fly no more !

Whither away wi' the sail? whither away
wi' the oar?

Day and night to the billow the fountain
calls :

Down shower the gambolling waterfalls
From wandering over the lea ;
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,
And thick with white bells the clover-hill
swells

High over the full-toned sea.

Merrily carol the revelling gales

Over the islands free :

From the green seabanks the rose down
trails

To the happy brimmed sea.

Come hither, come hither and be our lords,
For merry brides are we :

We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet
words.

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten

With pleasure and love and revelry ;

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten,

When the sharp clear twang of the golden
chords

Runs up the ridged sea.

* Original form.

the rolling earth
 es, "We are free."
 many a lilled row
 the crisped sea,
 ill-like flow
 "We are free."

AIRIES.*

mariners, and saw
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a crystal air,
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 and while they mused,
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eyes shall glisten

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es shall glisten,

ang of the golden

a.

rm.

Ol plovtes. — SONNET. — TO —.

#93

Ye will not find so happy a shore,
 Weary mariners! all the world o'er;
 O, fly no more!
 Harken ye, harken ye, sorrow shall
 darken ye,
 Danger and trouble and toil no more;
 Whither away?
 Drop the oar;
 Hither away
 Leap ashore;

O fly no more — no more:
 Whither away, whither away, whither away
 with the sail and the oar?

Ol plovtes.

I.

ALL thoughts, all creeds, all dreams are true,
 All visions wild and strange;

Man is the measure of all truth
 Unto himself. All truth is change,
 All men do walk in sleep, and all
 Have faith in that they dream:
 For all things are as they seem to all,
 And all things flow like a stream.

II.

There is no rest, no calm, no pause,
 Nor good nor ill, nor light nor shade,
 Nor essence nor eternal laws:
 For nothing is, but all is made.
 But if I dream that all these are,
 They are to me for that I dream;
 For all things are as they seem to all,
 And all things flow like a stream.

Argal — this very opinion is only true rela-
 tively to the flowing philosophers.

POEMS PUBLISHED IN THE EDITION OF 1833,
AND OMITTED IN LATER EDITIONS.

SONNET.

MINE be the strength of spirit fierce and free,
 Like some broad river rushing down alone,
 With the selfsame impulse wherewith he was
 thrown

From his loud fount upon the echoing lea: —
 Which with increasing might doth forward
 flee

By town, and tower, and hill, and cape, and
 isle,

And in the middle of the green salt sea
 Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile.

Mine be the Power which ever to its sway
 Will win the wise at once, and by degrees
 May into congenial spirits flow:

Even as the great gulf stream of Florida
 Floats far away into the Northern seas
 The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

TO —.

I.

ALL good things have not kept aloof,
 Nor wandered into other ways;
 I have not lacked thy mild reproof,
 Nor golden largess of thy praise,
 But life is full of weary days.

II.

Shake hands, my friend, across the brink
 Of that deep grave to which I go.
 Shake hands once more: I cannot sink
 So far — far down, but I shall know
 Thy voice, and answer from below.

III.

When, in the darkness over me,
 The four-handed mole shall scrape,
 Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,
 Nor wreath thy cap with doleful crape,
 But pledge me in the flowing grape.

IV.

And when the sappy field and wood
 Grow green beneath the showery gray,
 And rugged barks begin to bud,
 And through damp holts, new flushed with
 May,
 Ring sudden laughter of the Jay;

V.

Then let wise Nature work her will,
 And on my clay the darnels grow.
 Come only when the days are still,
 And at my headstone whisper low,
 And tell me if the woodbines blow,

VI.

If thou art blest, my mother's smile
 Undimmed, if bees are on the wing:
 Then cease, my friend, a little while,
 That I may hear the throistle sing
 His bridal song, the boast of spring.

VII.

Sweet as the noise in parched plains
 Of bubbling wells that fret the stones
 (If any sense in me remains),
 Thy words will be; thy cheerful tones
 As welcome to my crumbling bones.

BONAPARTE.

He thought to quell the stubborn hearts of
oak,
Madman! — to chain with chains, and bind
with bands
That island queen that sways the floods and
lands
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight woke,
When from her wooden walls, lit by sure
hands,
With thunders, and with lightnings, and with
smoke,
Peal after peal, the British battle broke,
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.
We taught him lowlier moods, when Elsi-
nore
Heard the war moan along the distant sea,
Rocking with shattered spars, with sudden
fires
Flamed over: at Trafalgar yet once more
We taught him: late he learned humility
Perforce, like those whom Gideon schooled
with briers.

SONNETS.

I.

O BEAUTY, passing beauty! sweetest Sweet!
How canst thou let me waste my youth in
sighs?
I only ask to sit beside thy feet.
Thou knowest I dare not look into thine
eyes.
Might I but kiss thy hand! I dare not fold
My arms about thee — scarcely dare to
speak.
And nothing seems to me so wild and bold,
As with one kiss to touch thy blessed cheek.
Methinks if I should kiss thee, no control
Within the thrilling brain could keep afloat
The subtle spirit. Even while I spoke,
The bare word kiss hath made my inner soul
To tremble like a lutestring, ere the note
Hath melted in the silence that it broke.

II.

But were I loved, as I desire to be,
What is there in the great sphere of the earth,
And range of evil between death and birth,
That I should fear, — if I were loved by
thee?
All the inner, all the outer world of pain
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou
wert mine,
As I have heard that, somewhere in the main,
Fresh-water springs come up, through bitter
brine.
'T were joy, not fear, clasped hand-in-hand
with thee,
To wait for death — mute — careless of all
ills,
Apart upon a mountain, though the surge
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge
Below us, as far on as eye could see.

THE HESPERIDES.

"Hesperus and his daughters three,
That sing about the golden tree."

Comus.

THE North-wind fall'n, in the new-starr'd
night
Zidonian Hanno, voyaging beyond
The hoary promontory of Soloe
Past Thymiatirion, in calm'd bays,
Between the southern and the western Horn,
Heard neither warbling of the nightingale,
Nor melody of the Libyan lotus flute
Blown seaward from the shore; but from a
slope
That ran bloom-bright into the Atlantic blue,
Beneath a highland leaning down a weight
Of cliffs, and zoned below with cedar shade,
Came voices, like the voices in a dream,
Continuous, till he reached the outer sea.

SONG.

I.

The golden apple, the golden apple, the hal-
lowed fruit,
Guard it well, guard it warily,
Singing airily,
Standing about the charmed root.
Round about all is mute,
As the snow-field on the mountain-peaks,
As the sand-field at the mountain-foot.
Crocodiles in briny creeks
Sleep and stir not: all is mute.
If ye sing not, if ye make false measure,
We shall lose eternal pleasure,
Worth eternal want of rest.
Laugh not loudly: watch the treasure
Of the wisdom of the West.
In a corner wisdom whispers. Five and
three
(Let it not be preached abroad) make an
awful mystery.
For the blossom unto threefold music blow-
eth;
Evermore it is born anew;
And the sap to threefold music floweth,
From the root
Drawn in the dark,
Up to the fruit,
Creeping under the fragrant bark,
Liquid gold, honeysweet, thro' and thro'.
Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,
Looking warily
Every way,
Guard the apple night and day,
Lest one from the East come and take it
away.

II.

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch, watch,
ever and aye,
Looking under silver hair with a silver eye.
Father, twinkle not thy steadfast sight;
Kingdoms lapse, and climates change, and
races die;
Honor comes with mystery,
Hoarded wisdom brings delight.

daughters three,
the golden tree."

Comus.

, in the new-starr'd

ging beyond
of Soloe
calm'd bays,
and the western Horn,
of the nightingale,
yan lotus flute
the shore; but from a

into the Atlantic blue,
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d day,
come and take it

esper, watch, watch,

with a silver eye.
headfast sight;
mates change, and

light.

Number, tell them over and number
How many the mystic fruit-tree holds
Lest the red-combed dragon slumber
Rolled together in purple folds.
Look to him, father, lest he wink, and the
golden apple be stol'n away,
For his ancient heart is drunk with over-
watchings night and day,
Round about the hallowed fruit-tree curled —
Sing away, sing aloud evermore in the wind,
without stop,
Lest his scaled eyelid drop,
For he is older than the world.
If he waken, we waken,
Rapidly levelling eager eyes.
If he sleep, we sleep,
Dropping the eyelid over the eye.
If the golden apple be taken,
The world will be overwise.
Five links, a golden chain, are we,
Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,
Bound about the golden tree.

III.

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch, watch,
night and day,
Lest the old wound of the world be heal'd,
The glory unseal'd,
The golden apple stol'n away,
And the ancient secret reveal'd.
Look from west to east along:
Father, old Himala weakens, Caucasus is
bold and strong.
Wandering waters unto wandering waters
call;
Let them clash together, foam and fall.
Out of watchings, out of wiles,
Comes the bliss of secret smiles.
All things are not told to all.
Half-round the mantling night is drawn,
Purple fringed with even and dawn,
Hesper hateth Phosphor, evening hateth
morn

IV.

Every flower and every fruit the redolent
breath
Of this warm sea-wind ripeneth,
Arching the billow in his sleep;
But the land-wind wandereth,
Broken by the highland-steep,
Two streams upon the violet deep;
For the western sun and the western star,
And the low west-wind, breathing afar,
The end of day and beginning of night
Make the apple holy and bright;
Holy and bright, round and full, bright and
blest,
Mellowed in a land of rest;
Watch it warily day and night;
All good things are in the west.
Till mid noon the cool east light
Is shut out by the tall hillbrow;
But when the full-faced sunset yellowly
Stays on the flowering arch of the bough,
The luscious fruitage clustereth mellowly,
Golden-kernelled, golden-cored,

Sunset-ripened above on the tree.
The world is wasted with fire and sword,
But the apple of gold hangs over the sea.
Five links, a golden chain are we,
Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,
Daughters three,
Bound about
The gnarled bole of the charmed tree.
The golden apple, the golden apple, the hal-
lowed fruit,
Guard it well, guard it warily,
Watch it warily,
Singing airily,
Standing about the charmed root.

ROSALIND.

I.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,
Whose free delight, from any height of rapid
flight,
Stoops at all game that wing the skies,
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, whither,
Careless both of wind and weather,
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,
Up or down the streaming wind?

II.

The quick lark's closest-carolled strains,
The shadow rushing up the sea,
The lightning flash between the rains,
The sunlight driving down the sea,
The leaping stream, the very wind,
That will not stay, upon his way,
To stoop the cowslip to the plains,
Is not so clear and bold and free
As you, my falcon Rosalind.
You care not for another's pains,
Because you are the soul of joy,
Bright metal all without alloy.
Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,
And flashes off a thousand ways
Through lips and eyes in subtle rays.
Your hawkeyes are keen and bright,
Keen with triumph, watching still
To pierce me through with pointed light;
But oftentimes they flash and glitter
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
And your words are seeming-bitter,
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
From excess of swift delight.

III.

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind;
Too long you keep the upper skies;
Too long you roam and wheel at will;
But we must hood your random eyes,
That care not whom they kill,
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,
Some red heath-flower in the dew,
Touched with sunrise. We must bind

And keep you fast, my Rosalind,
 Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,
 And clip your wings, and make you love:
 When we have lured you from above,
 And that delight of frolic flight, by day or
 night,
 From north to south;
 Will bind you fast in silken cords,
 And kiss away the bitter words
 From off your rosy mouth.*

SONG.

Who can say
 Why To-day
 To-morrow will be yesterday?
 Who can tell
 Why to smell
 The violet recalls the dewy prime
 Of youth and buried time?
 The cause is nowhere found in rhyme.

KATE.

I KNOW her by her angry air,
 Her bright black eyes, her bright black hair,
 Her rapid laughers wild and shrill,
 As laughers of the woodpecker
 From the bosom of a hill.
 'T is Kate — she sayeth what she will:
 For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,
 Clear as the twanging of a harp.
 Her heart is like a throbbing star.

* AUTHOR'S NOTE. — Perhaps the following lines may be allowed to stand as a separate poem; originally they made part of the text, where they were manifestly superfluous.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
 Bold, subtle, careless Rosalind,
 Is one of those who know no strife
 Of inward woe or outward fear;
 To whom the slope and stream of Life,
 The life before, the life behind,
 In the ear, from far and near,
 Chimeth musically clear.
 My falcon-hearted Rosalind,
 Full-sailed before a vigorous wind,
 Is one of those who cannot weep
 For others' woes, but overleap
 All the petty shocks and fears
 That trouble life in early years,
 With a flash of frolic scorn
 And keen delight, that never falls
 Away from freshness, self-upborne
 With such gladness as, whenever
 The fresh-flushing springtime calls
 To the flooding waters cool,
 Young fishes, on an April morn,
 Up and down a rapid river,
 Leap the little waterfalls
 That sing into the pebbled pool,
 My happy falcon, Rosalind,
 Hath daring fancies of her own,
 Fresh as the dawn before the day.
 Fresh as the early sea-smell blown
 Through vineyards from an inland bay.
 My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
 Because no shadow on you falls,
 Think you hearts are tennis balls
 To play with, wanton Rosalind?

Kate hath a spirit ever strung
 Like a new bow, and bright and sharp,
 As edges of the scymitar.
 Whence shall she take a fitting mate?
 For Kate no common love will feel;
 My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,
 As pure and true as blades of steel.

Kate saith "the world is void of might."
 Kate saith "the men are gilded flies."
 Kate snaps her fingers at my vows;
 Kate will not hear of lovers' sighs.
 I would I were an armed knight,
 Far famed for well-won enterprise,
 And wearing on my swarthy brows
 The garland of new-wreathed emprise:
 For in a moment I would pierce
 The blackest files of clanging fight,
 And strongly strike to left and right,
 In dreaming of my lady's eyes.
 Oh! Kate loves well the bold and fierce;
 But none are bold enough for Kate,
 She cannot find a fitting mate.

SONNET

WRITTEN ON HEARING OF THE OUTBREAK
 OF THE POLISH INSURRECTION.

Blow ye the trumpet, gather from afar
 The hosts to battle: be not bought and sold.
 Arise, brave Poles, the boldest of the bold;
 Break through your iron shackles — fling
 them far.
 O for those days of Piast, ere the Czar
 Grew to his strength among his deserts cold;
 When even to Moscow's cupolas were rolled
 The growing murmurs of the Polish war!
 Now must your noble anger blaze out more
 Than when from Sobieski, clan by clan,
 The Moslem myriads fell, and fled before —
 Than when Zamoyisky smote the Tartar
 Khan;
 Than earlier, when on the Baltic shore
 Boleslas drove the Pomeranian.

SONNET

ON THE RESULT OF THE LATE RUSSIAN
 INVASION OF POLAND.

How long, O God, shall men be ridden down,
 And trampled under by the last and least
 Of men? The heart of Poland hath not
 ceased
 To quiver, though her sacred blood hath
 drowned
 The fields; and out of every mouldering town
 Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be increased,
 Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East
 Transgress his ample bound to some new
 crown: —
 Cries to Thee, "Lord, how long shall these
 things be?"

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How long shall the icy-hearted Muscovite
Oppress the region?" Us, O Just and Good,
Forgive, who smiled when she was torn in
three;
Us, who stand *now*, when we should aid the
right—
A matter to be wept with tears of blood!

SONNET.

As when with downcast eyes we muse and
brood,
And ebb into a former life, or seem
To lapse far back in a confused dream
To states of mystical similitude;
If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,
Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,
So that we say, "All this hath been before,
All this *hath* been, I know not when or
where."

So, friend, when first I looked upon your face,
Our thought gave answer, each to each, so
true,
Opposed mirrors each reflecting each—
Altho' I knew not in what time or place,
Methought that I had often met with you,
And each had lived in the other's mind and
speech.

O DARLING ROOM.

I.

O DARLING room, my heart's delight,
Dear room, the apple of my sight,

With thy two couches soft and white,
There is no room so exquisite,
No little room so warm and bright,
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

II.

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen,
And Oberwinter's vineyards green,
Musical Lurlei; and between
The hills to Bingen have I been,
Bingen in Darmstadt, where the Rhene
Curves toward Mentz, a woody scene.

III.

Yet never did there meet my sight,
In any town to left or right,
A little room so exquisite,
With two such couches soft and white;
Not any room so warm and bright,
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH

You did late review my lays,
Crusty Christopher;
You did mingle blame and praise,
Rusty Christopher.
When I learnt from whom it came,
I forgave you all the blame,
Musty Christopher;
I could *not* forgive the praise,
Fusty Christopher.

FUGITIVE POEMS.

NO MORE.*

O SAD *No More*! O sweet *No More*!
O strange *No More*!
By a mossed brookbank on a stone
I smelt a wildweed flower alone;
There was a ringing in my ears,
And both my eyes pushed out with tears.
Surely all pleasant things had gone before,
Low-buried fathom deep beneath with thee,
No MORE!

ANACREONTICS.*

With roses musky-breathed,
And drooping daffodilly,
And silver-leaved lily,
And ivy darkly-wreathed,

I wove a crown before her,
For her I love so dearly,
A garland for Lenora.
With a silken cord I bound it.
Lenora, laughing clearly
A light and thrilling laughter,
About her forehead wound it,
And loved me ever after.

A FRAGMENT.*

WHERE is the Giant of the Sun, which stood
In the midnoon the glory of old Rhodes,
A perfect Idol with profulgent brows
Far-sheening down the purple seas to those
Who sailed from Mizraim underneath the star
Named of the Dragon—and between whose
limbs

* From the Gem, a literary annual, for 1831.

* From the Gem, a literary annual, for 1861.

Of brassy vastness broad-blown Argosies
Drave into haven? Yet endure unscathed
Of changeful cycles the great Pyramids
Broad-based amid the fleeting sands, and
sloped

Into the slumberous summer noon; but
where,

Mysterious Egypt, are thine obelisks
Graven with gorgeous emblems undiscerned?
Thy placid Sphinxes brooding o'er the Nile?
Thy shadowing Idols in the solitudes,
Awful Memnonian countenances calm
Looking athwart the burning flats, far off
Seen by the high-necked camel on the verge
Journeying southward? Where are thy mon-
uments

Filed by the strong and sunborn Anakim
Over their crowned brethren ON and OPH?
Thy Memnon when his peaceful lips are kist
With earliest rays, that from his mother's eyes
Flow over the Arabian bay, no more
Breathes low into the charmed ears of morn
Clear melody flattering the crisped Nile
By columned Thebes. Old Memphis hath
gone down:

The Pharaohs are no more: somewhere in
death

They sleep with staring eyes and gilded lips,
Wrapped round with spiced cerements in old
grots

Rock-hewn and sealed for ever.

SONNET.*

Me my own fate to lasting sorrow doometh:
Thy woes are birds of passage, transitory:
Thy spirit, circled with a living glory,
In summer still a summer joy resumeth.
Alone my hopeless melancholy gloometh.

Like a lone cypress, through the twilight
hoary,
From an old garden where no flower bloom-
eth,

One cypress on an island promontory.
But yet my lonely spirit follows thine,
As round the rolling earth night follows
day:

But yet thy lights on my horizon shine
Into my night, when thou art far away.
I am so dark, alas! and thou so bright,
When we two meet there's never perfect
light.

SONNET.*

CHECK every outflash, every ruder sally
Of thought and speech; speak low and
give up wholly

Thy spirit to mild-minded melancholy:
This is the place. Through yonder poplar
valley

Below the blue-green river windeth slowly;

* Friendship's Offering, 1833.

But in the middle of the sombre valley
The crisped waters whisper musically,
And all the haunted place is dark and holy.
The nightingale, with long and low preamble,
Warbled from yonder knoll of solemn
larches,
And in and out the woodbine's flowery
arches
The summer ridges wove their wanton
gambol,
And all the white-stemmed pinewood slept
above —
When in this valley first I told my love.

THE SKIPPING-ROPE.*

SURE never yet was Antelope
Could skip so lightly by.
Stand off, or else my skipping-rope
Will hit you in the eye.
How lightly whirls the skipping-rope!
How fairy-like you fly!
Go, get you gone, you muse and mope —
I hate that silly sigh.
Nay, dearest, teach me how to hope,
Or tell me how to die.
There, take it, take my skipping-rope,
And hang yourself thereby.

THE NEW TIMON AND THE
POETS.†

We know him, out of Shakespeare's art,
And those fine curses which he spoke;
The old Timon, with his noble heart,
That, strongly loathing, greatly broke.

So died the Old: here comes the New.
Regard him: a familiar face:
I thought we knew him: What, it's you,
The padded man — that wears the stay —

Who killed the girls and thrilled the boys
With dandy pathos when you wrote!
A Lion, you, that made a noise,
And shook a mane *en papillotes*.

And once you tried the Muses too;
You failed, Sir: therefore now you turn,
To fall on those who are to you
As Captain is to Subaltern.

But men of long-enduring hopes,
And careless what this hour may bring,
Can pardon little would-be POETS
And BRUMMELS, when they try to sting.

An Artist, Sir, should rest in Art,
And waive a little of his claim;
To have the deep Poetic heart
Is more than all poetic fame.

* Omitted from the edition of 1842.
† Published in Punch, February, 1846, signed
"Alcibiades."

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STANZAS.—SONNET.—BRITONS GUARD YOUR OWN. 299

But you, Sir, you are hard to please;
 You never look but half content;
 Nor like a gentleman at ease,
 With moral breadth of temperament.

And what with spites and what with fears,
 You cannot let a body be:
 It's always ringing in your ears,
 "They call this man as good as *me*."

What profits now to understand
 The merits of a spotless shirt —
 A dapper boot — a little hand —
 If half the little soul is dirt?

You talk of tinsel! why, we see
 The old mark of rouge upon your cheeks.
 You prate of Nature! you are he
 That spilt his life about the cliques.

A TIMON you! Nay, nay, for shame:
 It looks too arrogant a jest —
 The fierce old man — to take his name,
 You bandbox. Off, and let him rest.

STANZAS.*

WHAT time I wasted youthful hours,
 One of the shining winged powers,
 Show'd me vast cliffs with crown of towers.

As towards the gracious light I bow'd,
 They seem'd high palaces and proud,
 Hid now and then with sliding cloud.

He said, "The labor is not small:
 Yet winds the pathway free to all:—
 Take care thou dost not fear to fall!"

SONNET

TO WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY.†

FAREWELL, Macready, since to-night we
 part.

Full-handed thunders often have confest
 Thy power, well-used to move the public
 breast.

We thank thee with one voice, and from the
 heart.

Farewell, Macready; since this night we part.
 Go, take thine honors home: rank with the
 best,

Garrick, and statelier Kemble, and the rest
 Who made a nation purer thro' their art.

Thine is it, that our Drama did not die,
 Nor ficker down to brainless pantomime,
 And those gilt gauds men-children swarm
 to see.

Farewell, Macready; moral, grave, sublime.
 Our Shakespeare's bland and universal eye
 Dwells pleased, thro' twice a hundred
 years, on thee.

* The Keepsake, 1851.

† Read by Mr. John Forster at a dinner given to
 Mr. Macready, March 2, 1852, on his retirement
 from the stage.

BRITONS, GUARD YOUR OWN.*

RISE, Britons, rise, if manhood be not dead;
 The world's last tempest darkens overhead;
 The Pope has bless'd him;
 The Church caress'd him;

He triumphs; maybe we shall stand alone.
 Britons, guard your own.

His ruthless host is bought with plunder'd
 gold,

By lying priests the peasants' votes controll'd.
 All freedom vanish'd,

The true men banish'd,
 He triumphs; maybe we shall stand alone.
 Britons, guard your own.

Peace-lovers we — sweet Peace we all de-
 sire —

Peace-lovers we — but who can trust a liar? —
 Peace-lovers, haters

Of shameless traitors,
 We hate not France, but this man's heart of
 stone,

Britons, guard your own.

We hate not France, but France has lost her
 voice.

This man is France, the man they call her
 choice.

By tricks and spying,
 By craft and lying,
 And murder was her freedom overthrown.
 Britons, guard your own.

"Vive l'Empereur" may follow by and by;
 "God save the Queen" is here a truer cry.

God save the Nation,
 The toleration,
 And the free speech that makes a Briton
 known.

Britons, guard your own.

Rome's dearest daughter now is captive
 France,

The Jesuit laughs, and reckoning on his
 chance,

Would unrelenting,
 Kill all dissenting,
 Till we were left to fight for truth alone.
 Britons, guard your own.

Call home your ships across Biscayan tides,
 To blow the battle from their oaken sides.

Why waste they yonder
 Their idle thunder?
 Whystay they there to guard a foreign throne?
 Seamen, guard your own.

We were the best of marksmen long ago,
 We won old battles with our strength, the
 bow.

New practise, yeomen,
 Like those bowmen,
 Till your balls fly as their shafts have flown.
 Yeomen, guard your own.

* The Examiner, 1852.

His soldier-ridden Highness might incline
To take Sardinia, Belgium, or the Rhine :
Shall we stand idle,
Nor seek to bridle
His rude aggressions, till we stand alone?
Make their cause your own.

Should he land here, and for one hour prevail,
There must no man go back to bear the tale :
No man to bear it —
Swear it ! we swear it !
Although we fight the banded world alone,
We swear to guard our own.

THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY, 1852.*

My lords, we heard you speak ; you told us
all
That England's honest censure went too
far ;

That our free press should cease to bawl,
Not sting the fiery Frenchman into war.
It was an ancient privilege, my lords,
To fling what'er we felt, not fearing, into
words.

We love not this French God, this child of
Hell,
Wild War, who breaks the converse of the
wise ;

But though we love kind Peace so well,
We dare not, e'en by silence, sanction lies.
It might safe be our censures to withdraw ;
And yet, my lords, not well ; there is a higher
law.

As long as we remain, we must speak free,
Though all the storm of Europe on us
break ;

No little German state are we,
But the one voice in Europe ; we *must*
speak ;

That if to-night our greatness were struck
dead,
There might remain some record of the
things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be bold.
Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant o'er.
Better the waste Atlantic roll'd

On her and us and ours for evermore.
What ! have we fought for freedom from our
prime,
At last to dodge and palter with a public
crime ?

Shall we fear him ? our own we never feared.
From our first Charles by force we wrung
our claims,

Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,
And flung the burden of the second James.
I say we never fear'd ! and as for these,
We broke them on the land, we drove them
on the seas.

* The Examiner, 1852, and signed "Merlin."

And you, my lords, you make the people
muse,

In doubt if you be of our Barons' breed —
Were those your sires who fought at Lewes?
Is this the manly strain of Runnymede?
O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,
Would lip in honey'd whispers of this mon-
strous fraud.

We feel, at least, that silence here were sin.
Not ours the fault if we have feeble hosts —

If easy patrons of their kin
Have left the last free race with naked
coasts !

They knew the precious things they had to
guard :

For us, we will not spare the tyrant one hard
word.

Though niggard throats of Manchester may
bawl,

What England was, shall her true sons
forget ?

We are not cotton-spinners all,
But some love England, and her honor yet.
And these in our Thermopylae shall stand,
And hold against the world the honor of the
land.

HANDS ALL ROUND.*

First drink a health, this solemn night,
A health to England, every guest ;

That man 's the best cosmopolite
Who loves his native country best.

May freedom's ark for ever live
With stronger life from day to day ;

That man 's the best Conservative
Who lops the mouldered branch away.

Hands all round !
God the tyrant's hope confound !
To this great cause of Freedom drink, my
friends,
And the great name of England, round and
round.

A health to Europe's honest men !
Heaven guard them from her tyrants' jails !

From wronged Poerio's noisome den,
From iron limbs and tortured nails !

We curse the crimes of southern kings,
The Russian whips and Austrian rods —

We likewise have our evil things ;
Too much we make our Ledgers, Gods.

Yet hands all round !
God the tyrant's cause confound !
To Europe's better health we drink, my
friends,

And the great name of England, round and
round !

What health to France, if France be she,
Whom martial progress only charms ?

Yet tell her — better to be free
Than vanquish all the world in arms.

* The Examiner, 1852, and signed "Merlin."

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THE WAR. — ON A SPITEFUL LETTER. — 1865-1866.

301

Her frantic city's flashing heats
But fire, to blast the hopes of men.
Why change the titles of your streets?
You fools, you'll want them all again.
Hands all round!
God the tyrant's cause confound!
To France, the wiser France, we drink, my
friends,
And the great name of England, round and
round.

Gigantic daughter of the West,
We drink! thee across the flood,
We know thee and we love thee best,
For art thou not of British blood?
Should war's mad blast again be blown,
Permit not thou the tyrant powers
To fight thy mother here alone,
But let thy broadsides roar with ours.
Hands all round!
God the tyrant's cause confound!
To our dear kinsmen of the West, my friends,
And the great name of England, round and
round.

O rise, our strong Atlantic sons,
When war against our freedom springs!
O speak to Europe through your guns!
They *can* be understood by kings.
You must not mix our Queen with those
That wish to keep their people fools;
Our freedom's foemen are her foes,
She comprehends the race she rules.
Hands all round!
God the tyrant's cause confound!
To our dear kinsman in the West, my friends,
And the great name of England, round and
round.

THE WAR.*

THERE is a sound of thunder afar,
Storm in the South that darkens the day,
Storm of battle and thunder of war,
Well, if it do not roll our way.
Form! form! Riflemen form!
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!
Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen form!

Be not deaf to the sound that warns!
Be not gull'd by a despot's plea!
Are figs of thistles, or grapes of thorns?
How should a despot set men free?
Form! form! Riflemen form!
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!
Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen form!

Let your Reforms for a moment go,
Look to your butts and take good aims.
Better a rotten borough or so,
Than a rotten fleet or a city in flames!

* London Times, May 9, 1869.

Form! form! Riflemen form!
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!
Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen form!

Form, be ready to do or die!
Form in Freedom's name and the Queen's!
True, that we have a faithful ally,
But only the Devil knows what he means.
Form! form! Riflemen form!
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!
Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen form!

T.

ON A SPITEFUL LETTER.*

HERE, it is here — the close of the year,
And with it a spiteful letter.
My fame in song has done him much wrong,
For himself has done much better.

O foolish bard, is your lot so hard,
If men neglect your pages?
I think not much of yours or of mine:
I hear the roll of the ages.

This fallen leaf, is n't fame as brief?
My rhymes may have been the stronger.
Yet hate me not, but abide your lot;
I last but a moment longer.

O faded leaf, is n't fame as brief?
What room is here for a hater?
Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener leaf,
For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I — is n't that your cry?
And I shall live to see it.
Well, if it be so, so it is, you know;
And if it be so — so be it!

O summer leaf, is n't life as brief?
But this is the time of hollies.
And my heart, my heart is an evergreen:
I hate the spites and the follies.

1865-1866.†

I stood on a tower in the wet,
And New Year and Old Year met,
And winds were roaring and blowing;
And I said, "O years that meet in tears,
Have ye aught that is worth the knowing?
Science enough and exploring,
Wanderers coming and going,
Matter enough for deploring,
But aught that is worth the knowing?"
Seas at my feet were flowing,
Waves on the shingle pouring,
Old Year roaring and blowing,
And New Year blowing and roaring.

* Once a Week, January 4, 1868.

† Good Words, March, 1868.

THE WINDOW;

OR,
THE SONGS OF THE WRENS.

WORDS WRITTEN FOR MUSIC.

THE MUSIC BY ARTHUR SULLIVAN.

FOUR years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as "Orpheus with his Lute," and I dressed up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

December, 1870.

A. TENNYSON.

I. ON THE HILL.

THE lights and shadows fly !
Yonder it brightens and darkens down on the plain.

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's eye !
O is it the brook, or a pool, or her window-paue,

When the winds are up in the morning ?

Clouds that are racing above,
And winds and lights and shadows that cannot be still,

All running on one way to the home of my love,

You are all running on, and I stand on the slope of the hill,

And the winds are up in the morning !

Follow, follow the chase !

And my thoughts are as quick and as quick,
ever on, on, on.

O lights, are you flying over her sweet little face ?

And my heart is there before you are come and gone,

When the winds are up in the morning !

Follow them down the slope !

And I follow them down to the window-pane of my dear.

And if brightens and darkens and brightens like my hope,

And it darkens and brightens and darkens like my fear,

And the winds are up in the morning.

II. AT THE WINDOW.

VINE, vine and eglantine,
Clasp her window, trail and twine !
Rose, rose and clematis,
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,
Kiss, kiss : and make her a bower
All of flowers, and drop me a flower,
Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,
Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine ?
Rose, rose and clematis,
Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,
Kiss, kiss — And out of her bower
All of flowers, a flower, a flower,
Drop a flower.

III. GONE !

GONE !

Gone till the end of the year,

Gone, and the light gone with her and left me in shadow here !

Gone — flitted away,

Taken the stars from the night and the sun from the day !

Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a storm in the air !

Flown to the east or the west, flitted I know not where !

Down in the south is a flash and a groan :
she is there ! she is there !

IV.

WINTER.

The frost is here,
And fuel is dear,
And woods are sear,
And fires burn clear,
And frost is here
And has bitten the heel of the going year.

Bite, frost, bite !
You roll up away from the light
The blue woodlouse, and the plump dormouse,
And the bees are still'd, and the flies are
kill'd,
And you bite far into the heart of the house,
But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite !
The woods are all the searer,
The fuel is all the dearer,
The fires are all the clearer,
My spring is all the nearer,
You have bitten into the heart of the earth,
But not into mine.

V.

SPRING.

Birds' love and birds' song
Flying here and there,
Birds' song and birds' love,
And you with gold for hair
Birds' song and birds' love,
Passing with the weather,
Men's song and men's love,
To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love,
And women's love and men's !
And you my wren with a crown of gold,
You my Queen of the wrens !
You the Queen of the wrens —
We'll be birds of a feather,
I'll be King of the Queen of the wrens,
And all in a nest together.

I.

THE LETTER.

WHERE is another sweet as my sweet,
Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy?
Fine little hands, fine little feet —
Dewy blue eye.
Shall I write to her? shall I go?
Ask her to marry me by and by?
Somebody said that she'd say no;
Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face?
Ay or no, from shy of the shy?

Go, little letter, apace, apace,

Fly !
Fly to the light in the valley below —
Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye:
Somebody said that she'd say no;
Somebody knows that she'll say ay !

VII.

NO ANSWER.

The mist and the rain, the mist and the rain !
Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?
And never a glimpse of her window-pane !
And I may die but the grass will grow,
And the grass will grow when I am gone,
And the wet west wind and the world will go on.

Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,
No is trouble and cloud and storm,
Ay is life for a hundred years.
No will push me down to the worm,
And when I am there and dead and gone,
The wet west wind and the world will go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and the wet !
Wet west wind, how you blow, you blow !
And never a line from my lady yet !
Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?
Blow then, blow, and when I am gone,
The wet west wind and the world may go on.

VIII.

NO ANSWER.

WINDS are loud and you are dumb:
Take my love, for love will come,
Love will come but once a life.
Winds are loud and winds will pass !
Spring is here with leaf and grass:
Take my love and be my wife.
After-loves of maids and men
Are but dainties drest again:
Love me now, you'll love me then:
Love can love but once a life.

IX.

THE ANSWER.

Two little hands that meet,
Clasped on her seal, my sweet !
Must I take you and break you,
Two little hands that meet?
I must take you, and break you,
And loving hands must part —
Take, take — break, break —
Break — you may break my heart.
Faint heart never won —
Break, break, and all's done.

IX.

AY!

Be merry, all birds, to-day,
 Be merry on earth as you never were
 merry before,
 Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far away,
 And merry for ever and ever, and one day
 more.

Why?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

Look, look, how he flits,
 The fire-crown'd king of the wrens, from
 out of the pine!
 Look how they tumble the blossom, the mad
 little tits!

"Cuck-oo! Cuck-oo!" was ever a May
 so fine?

Why?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

O merry the linnet and dove,
 And swallow and sparrow and throstle, and
 have your desire!
 O merry my heart, you have gotten the wings
 of love,
 And sit like the king of the wrens with a
 crown of fire.

Why?

For it's ay ay ay, ay ay.

X.

WHEN?

Sun comes, moon comes,
 Time slips away,
 Sun sets, moon sets,
 Love, fix a day.

"A year hence, a year hence."
 "We shall both be gray."
 "A month hence, a month hence."
 "Far, far away."

"A week hence, a week hence."
 "Ah, the long delay."
 "Wait a little, wait a little,
 "You shall fix a day."

"To-morrow, love, to-morrow,
 And that 's an age away."
 Blaze upon her window, sun,
 And honor all the day.

XI.

MARRIAGE MORNING.

LIGHT, so low upon earth,
 You send a flash to the sun.
 Here is the golden close of love,
 All my wooing is done.
 O the woods and the meadows,
 Woods where we hid from the wet,
 Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,
 Meadows in which we met!
 Light, so low in the vale,
 You flash and lighten afar:
 For this is the golden morning of love,
 And you are his morning star.
 Flash, I am coming, I come,
 By meadow and stile and wood:
 O lighten into my eyes and my heart,
 Into my heart and my blood!
 Heart, are you great enough
 For a love that never tires?
 O heart, are you great enough for love?
 I have heard of thorns and briers.
 Over the thorns and briers,
 Over the meadows and stiles,
 Over the world to the end of it
 Flash for a million miles

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GARETH AND LYNETTE.

THE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring
Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted
Pine

Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd away.
"How he went down," said Gareth, "as a
false knight

Or evil king before my lance if lance
Were mine to use — O senseless cataract,
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy —
And yet thou art but swollen with cold
snows,

And mine is living blood: thou dost His will,
The Maker's, and not knowest, and I that
know,

Have strength and wit, in my good mother's
hall

Linger with vacillating obedience,
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and whistled
to —

Since the good mother holds me still a
child —

Good mother is bad mother unto me!
A worse were better: yet no worse would I.
Heaven yield her for it, but in me put force
To weary her ears with one continuous
prayer,

Until she let me fly disengaged to sweep
In ever-highering eagle-circles up
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence
swoop

Down upon all things base, and dash them
dead,

A knight of Arthur, working out his will,
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain, when
he came

With Modred hither in the summertime,
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven
knight.

Modred for want of worthier was the judge.
Then I so shook him in the saddle, he said,
'Thou hast half prevail'd against me,' said
so — he —

Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was mute,
For he is always sullen: what care I?"

And Gareth went, and hovering round
her chair

Ask'd, "Mother, tho' ye count me still the
child,
Sweet mother, do ye love the child?" She
laugh'd,

"Thou art but a wild-geese to question it."
"Then, mother, an ye love the child," he
said,

"Being a goose and rather tame than wild,
Hear the child's story." "Yea, my well-
beloved,

An 't were but of the goose and golden
eggs."

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling
eyes,

"Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of
mine

Was finer gold than any goose can lay;
For this an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid

Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.

And there was ever haunting round the
palm

A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw
The splendor sparkling from aloft, and
thought

'An I could climb and lay my hand upon
it,

Then were I wealthier than a leash of
kings.'

But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb,
One, that had loved him from his childhood,

caught

And stay'd him, 'Climb not lest thou break
thy neck,

I charge thee by my love,' and so the boy,
Sweet mother, neither clomb, nor brake his
neck,

But brake his very heart in pining for it,
And past away."

To whom the mother said,
"True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself
and climb'd,

And handed down the golden treasure to
him."

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling
eyes,

"Gold? said I gold? — ay then, why he, or
she,

Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world
Had ventured — had the thing I spake of
been

Mere gold — but this was all of that true
steel,

Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,
And lightnings play'd about it in the storm,

And all the little fowl were flurried at it,
And there were cries and clashing in the
nest,

That sent him from his senses: let me go."

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and said,
"Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?"

Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd
out!

For ever since when traitor to the King
He fought against him in the Barons' war,
And Arthur gave him back his territory,
His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies
there

A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburialable,
No more ; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks,
nor knows.

And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,
Albeit neither loved with that full love
I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love :

Stay therefore thou ; red berries charm the
bird,

And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the
wars,

Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang
Of wrench'd or broken limb — an often
chance

In those brain-stunning shocks, and tourney-
falls,

Frights to my heart ; but stay : follow the
deer

By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns ;
So make thy manhood mightier day by day :
Sweet is the chase : and I will seek thee
out

Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace
Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone
year,

Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
I know not thee, myself, nor anything.
Stay, my best son ! ye are yet more boy than
man."

Then Gareth, "An ye hold me yet for
child,

Hear yet once more the story of the child.
For, mother, there was once a King, like
ours ;

The prince his heir, when tall and marriage-
able,

Ask'd for a bride ; and thereupon the King
Set two before him. One was fair, strong,
arm'd —

But to be won by force — and many men
Desired her ; one, good lack, no man de-
sired.

And these were the conditions of the King :
That save he won the first by force, he
needs

Must wed that other, whom no man desired,
A red-faced bride who knew herself so vile,
That evermore she long'd to hide herself,

Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye —
Yea — some she cleaved to, but they died of
her.

And one — they call'd her Fame ; and one,
O Mother,
How can ye keep me tether'd to you —
Shame !

Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.
Follow the deer ? follow the Christ, the
King,

Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow
the King —
Else, wherefore born ?"

To whom the mother said,
"Sweet son, for there be many who deem
him not,
Or will not deem him, wholly proven
King —

Albeit in mine own heart I knew him
King,

When I was frequent with him in my youth,
And heard him Kingly speak, and doubted
him

No more than he, himself ; but felt him
mine,

Of closest kin to me : yet — wilt thou leave
Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine
all,

Life, limbs, for one that is not proven
King ?

Stay, till the cloud that settles round his
birth

Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son."

And Gareth answer'd quickly, "Not an
hour,

So that ye yield me — I will walk thro' fire,
Mother, to gain it — your full leave to go.
Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd

Rome
From off the threshold of the realm, and
crush'd

The Idolaters, and made the people free ?
Who should be King save him who makes
us free ?"

So when the Queen, who long had sought
in vain

To break him from the intent to which he
grew,

Found her son's will unwaveringly one,
She answer'd craftily, "Will ye walk thro'
fire ?

Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the
smoke.

Ay, go then, an ye must : only one proof,
Before thou ask the King to make thee
knight,

Of thine obedience and thy love to me,
Thy mother, — I demand."

And Gareth cried,
"A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.

Nay — quick ! the proof to prove me to the
quick !"

But slowly spake the mother, looking at
him,

"Prince, thou shall go disguised to Arthur's
hall,

And hire thyself to serve for meats and
drinks

Among the scullions and the kitchen-knaves,
And those that hand the dish across the
bar.

Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any one.
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a
day."

For so the Queen believed that when her
ann

Beheld his only way to glory lead
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,

Her own true Gareth was too princely-proud
To pass thereby ; so should he rest with her,
Closed in her castle from the sound of arms

heart I knew him

with him in my youth,
speak, and doubted

myself; but felt him

— wilt thou leave

here, and risk thine

that is not proven

at settles round his

Stay, sweet son."

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Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied,
"The thrall in person may be free in soul,
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,
And since thou art my mother, must obey.
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;
For hence will I, disguised, and hire my-
self

To serve with scullions and with kitchen-
knaves;
Nor tell my name to any—no, not the
King."

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's eye
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he
turn'd,
Perplex his outward purpose, till an hour,
When waken'd by the wind which with full
voice
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to
dawn,

He rose, and out of slumber calling two
That still had tended on him from his birth,
Before the wakeful mother heard him, went.

The three were clad like tillers of the soil.
Southward they turn'd their faces. The birds
made
Melody on branch, and melody in mid air.
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into
green,
And the live green had kindled into flowers,
For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on the
plain

That broaden'd toward the base of Camelot,
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn
Rolling her smoke about the Royal mount,
That rose between the forest and the field.
At times the summit-of the high city flash'd;
At times the spires and turrets half-way
down

Prick'd thro' the mist: at times the great
gate shone

Only, that open'd on the field below:
Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth were
amazed,

One crying, "Let us go no farther, lord.
Here is a city of Enchanters, built
By fairy Kings." The second echo'd him,
"Lord, we have heard from our wise men at
home

To Northward, that this King is not the
King,

But only changeling out of Fairyland,
Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery
And Merlin's glamour." Then the first again,
"Lord, there is no such city anywhere,
But all a vision."

Gareth answer'd them
With laughter, swearing he had glamour
enow

In his own blood, his princedom, youth and
hopes,

To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea;
So push'd them all unwilling toward the
gate.

And there was no gate like it under heaven;
For barefoot on the keystone, which was
lined

And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
The Lady of the Lake stood: all her dress
Wept from her sides as water flowing away;
But like the cross her great and goodly arms
Stretch'd under all the cornice and upheld:
And drops of water fell from either hand;
And down from one a sword was hung, from
one

A censer, either worn with wind and storm;
And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish;
And in the space to left of her, and right,
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,
New things and old co-twisted, as if Time
Were nothing, so inveterately, that men
Were giddy gazing there; and over all
High on the top were those three Queens,
the friends

Of Arthur, who should help him at his need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a
space

Stared at the figures, that at last it seem'd
The dragon-boughts and elvish embleming
Began to move, seethe, twine and curl:
they call'd

To Gareth, "Lord, the gateway is alive."

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his
eyes

So long, that ev'n to him they seem'd to
move.

Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.
Back from the gate started the three, to
whom

From out thereunder came an ancient man,
Long-bearded, saying, "Who be ye, my
sons?"

Then Gareth, "We be tillers of the soil,
Who leaving share in furrow come to see
The glories of our King; but these, my men,
(Your city moved so weirdly in the mist,)
Doubt if the King be King at all, or come
From Fairyland; and whether this be built
By magic, and by fairy Kings and Queens;
Or whether there be any city at all,
Or all a vision; and this music now
Hath scared them both, but tell thou these
the truth."

Then that old Seer made answer playing
on him

And saying, "Son, I have seen the good
ship sail

Keel upward and mast downward in the
heavens,

And solid turrets topy-turvy in air:
And here is truth; but an it please thee not,

Take thou the truth as thou hast told it me.
For truly, as thou sayest, a Fairy King
And Fairy Queens have built the city, son;

They came from out a sacred mountain-cleft

Toward the sunrise, each with harp in hand,
And built it to the music of their harps.
And as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son,
For there is nothing in it as it seems
Saving the King; tho' some there be that
hold

The King a shadow, and the city real:
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou pass
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou become
A thrall to his enchantments, for the King
Will bind thee by such vows, as is a shame
A man should not be bound by, yet the
which

No man can keep; but, so thou dread to
swear,

Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide
Without, among the cattle of the field.
For, an ye heard a music, like enow
They are building still, seeing the city is
built

To music, therefore never built at all,
And therefore built forever.

Gareth spake

Anger'd, "Old Master, reverence thine own
beard
That looks as white as utter truth, and
seems
Wellnigh as long as thou are statured tall!
Why mockest thou the stranger that hath
been
To thee fair-spoken?"

But the Seer replied,
"Know ye not then the Riddling of the
Bards?
'Confusion, and illusion, and relation,
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion?'
I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,
And all that see thee, for thou art not who
Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou art.
And now thou goest up to mock the King,
Who cannot brook the shadow of any lie."

Unmockingly the mocker ending here
Turn'd to the right, and past along the
plain;
Whom Gareth looking after said, "My
men,
Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
Here on the threshold of our enterprise.
Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I:
Well, we will make amends."

With all good cheer

He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd with
his twain
Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces,
And stately, rich in emblem and the work
Of ancient Kings who did their days in
stone;
Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at Arthur's
court,
Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and every-
where
At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening
peak

And pinnacle, and had made it spire to
heaven.

And ever and anon a knight would pass
Outward, or inward to the hall: his arms
Clash'd; and the sound was good to Gareth's
ear.

And out of bower and casement shyly glanced
Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of
love;

And all about a healthful people stept
As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld
Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall
The splendor of the presence of the King
Throned, and delivering doom—and look'd
no more—

But felt his young heart hammering in his
ears,
And thought, "For this half-shadow of a lie
The truthful King will doom me when I
speak."

Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes
Of those tall knights, that ranged about the
throne,
Clear honor shining like the dewy star
Of dawn, and faith in their great King, with
pure
Affection, and the light of victory,
And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the King,
"A boon, Sir King! Thy father, Uther,
reft
From my dead lord a field with violence:
For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold,
Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,
We yielded not; and then he reft us of it
Perforce, and left us neither gold nor field."

Said Arthur, "Whether would ye? gold or
field?"
To whom the woman weeping, "Nay, my
lord,
The field was pleasant in my husband's eye."

And Arthur, "Have thy pleasant field
again,
And thrice the gold for Uther's use thereof,
According to the years. No boon is here,
But justice, so thy say be proven true.
Accursed, who from the wrongs his father
did
Would shape himself a right!"

And while she past,

Came yet another widow crying to him,
"A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy, King,
am I.
With thine own hand thou slewest my dear
lord,
A knight of Uther in the Barons' war,
When Lot and many another rose and
fought
Against thee, saying thou wert basely born.

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And while she past,
crying to him,
hine enemy, King,

thou slewest my dear

Barons' war,
another rose and

wert bagely born.

I held with these, and loathe to ask thee
ought.

Yet lo! my husband's brother had my son
Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved him
dead;

And standeth seized of that inheritance
Which thou that slewest the sire hast left the
son.

So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,
Grant me some knight to do the battle for
me.

Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my son."

Then strode a good knight forward, crying
to him,

"A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman, I.
Give me to right her wrong, and slay the
man."

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and
cried,

"A boon, Sir King! ev'n that thou grant
her none,

This railer, that hath mock'd thee in full
hall—

None; or the wholesome boon of gyve and
gag."

But Arthur, "We sit, King, to help the
wrong'd

Thro' all our realm. The woman loves her
lord.

Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and
hates!

The kings of old had doom'd thee to the
flames,

Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee
dead,

And Uther slit thy tongue; but get thee
hence—

Lest that rough humor of the kings of old
Return upon me! Thou that art her kin,

Go likewise; lay him low and slay him
not,

But bring him here, that I may judge the
right,

According to the justice of the King:

Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King
Who lived and died for men, the man shall
die."

Then came in hall the messenger of Mark,
A name of evil savor in the land,

The Cornish king. In either hand he bore
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as shines

A field of charlock in the sudden sun
Between two show'ers, a cloth of palest gold,

Which down he laid before the throne, and
knelt,

Delivering, that his Lord, the vassal king,
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot;

For having heard that Arthur of his grace
Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram,

knight,
And, for himself was of the greater state,
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord

Would yield him this large honor all the
more;

So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of
gold,

In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to
rend

In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.
An oak-tree smouldered there. "The goodly

knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand among
these?"

For, midway down the side of that long hall
A stately pile,—whereof along the front,

Some blazon'd, some but carven, and some
blank,

There ran a treble range of stony shields,—
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the

hearth.
And under every shield a knight was named:

For this was Arthur's custom in his hall;
When some good knight had done one noble

deed,
His arms were carven only; but if twain

His arms were blazon'd also; but if none
The shield was blank and bare without a

sign
Saving the name beneath; and Gareth saw
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and

bright,
And Modred's blank as death; and Arthur
cried

To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

"More like are we to reave him of his
crown

Than make him knight because men call
him king.

The kings we found, ye know we stay'd their
hands

From war among themselves, but left them
kings;

Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,
Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them we

enroll'd
Among us, and they sit within our hall.

But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name of
king,

As Mark would sully the low state of churl:
And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,

Return, and meet, and hold him from our
eyes,

Lest we should lap him up in cloth of lead,
Silenced forever—craven—a man of plots,

Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside ambush-
ings—

No fault of thine: let Kay, the seneschal,
Look to thy wants, and send thee satisfied—

Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand be
seen!"

And many another suppliant crying came
With noise of ravage wrought by beast and

man,
And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last Gareth leaning both hands heavily
Down on the shoulders of the twain, his

men,

Approach'd between them toward the King,
 And ask'd,
 "A boon, Sir King (his voice was all
 ashamed),
 For see ye not how weak and hunger worn
 I seem — leaning on these? grant me to
 serve
 For meat and drink among thy kitchen-
 knives
 A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my
 name.
 Hereafter I will fight."

To him he King,
 "A goodly youth and worth a goodlier
 boon!
 But an thou wilt no goodlier, then must
 Kay,
 The master of the meats and drinks be
 thine."

He rose and past; then Kay, a man of
 mien
 Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself
 Root-bitten by white lichen,

"Lo ye now!
 This fellow hath broken from some Abbey,
 where,
 God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,
 However that might chance! but an he
 work,
 Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,
 And alecker shall he shine than any hog."

Then Lancelot standing near, "Sir Senes-
 chal,
 Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray, and
 all the hounds;
 A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost not
 know;
 Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and fine,
 High nose, a nostril large and fine, and
 hands
 Large, fair and fine! — Some young lad's
 mystery —
 But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the
 boy
 Is noble-natured. Treat him with all grace,
 Lest he should come to shame thy judging
 of him."

Then Kay, "What murmurest thou of
 mystery?
 Think ye this fellow will poison the King's
 dish?
 Nay, for he spake too fool-like: mystery!
 Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd
 For horse and armor: fair and fine, for-
 sooth!
 Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see thou
 to it
 That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some fine
 day
 Undo thee not — and leave my man to me."

So Gareth all for glory underwent
 The sooty yoke of kitchen vassalage;

Ate with young lads his portion by the door,
 And couch'd at night with grimy kitchen-
 knives.

And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,
 But Kay the seneschal who loved him not
 Would hustle and harry him, and labor him
 Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set
 To turn the broach, draw water, or hew
 wood,

Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd himself
 With all obedience to the King, and wrought
 All kind of service with a noble ease
 That graced the lowliest act in doing it.

And when the thralls had talk among them-
 selves,

And one would praise the love that linkt the
 King

And Lancelot — how the King had saved his
 life

In battle twice, and Lancelot once the
 King's —

For Lancelot was the first in Tournament,
 But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field —
 Gareth was glad. Or if some other told,
 How once the wandering forester at dawn,
 Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,
 On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,
 A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,
 "He passes to the Isle Avilion,
 He passes and is heal'd and cannot die" —
 Gareth was glad. But if their talk were
 foul,

Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,
 Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud
 That first they mock'd, but, after, reverence'd
 him.

Or Gareth telling some prodigious tale
 Of knights, who sliced a red life-bubbling
 way

Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held
 All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates
 Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
 Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal, would
 come

Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind
 Among dead leaves, and drive them all
 apart.

Or when the thralls had sport among them-
 selves,

So there were any trial of mastery,
 He, by two yards in casting bar or stone
 Was counted best; and if there chanced a
 joust,

So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go,
 Would hurry thither, and when he saw the
 knights

Clash like the coming and retiring wave,
 And the spear spring, and good horse reel,
 the boy

Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among the
 thralls;

But in the weeks that follow'd, the good
 Queen,

Repentant of the word she made him swear,
 And saddening in her childless castle, sent,
 Between the crescent and the waning moon,

portion by the door,
with grimy kitchen-

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made him swear,
less castle, sent,
decrecent moon,

Arms for her son, and loosed him from his
vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of Lot
With whom he used to play at tourney once,
When both were children, and in lonely
haunts

Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,
And each at either dash from either end—
Shame never made girl redder than Gareth
joy.

He laugh'd; he sprang. "Out of the
smoke, at once

I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee—
These news be mine, none other's—nay, the
King's—

Descend into the city": whereon he sought
The King alone, and found, and told him
all.

"I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in a
tilt

For pastime; yea, he said it: joust can I.
Make me thy knight—in secret! let my
name

Be hid'd'n, and give me the first quest, I
spring
Like flame from ashes."

Here the King's calm eye
Fell on, and check'd, and made him flush,
and bow

Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd him,
"Son, the good mother let me know thee
here,

And sent her wish that I would yield thee
thine.

Make thee my knight? my knights are
sworn to vows

Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And loving, utter faithfulness in love,
And uttermost obedience to the King."

Then Gareth, lightly springing from his
knees,

"My King, for hardihood I can promise
thee.

For uttermost obedience make demand
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,
No mellow master of the meats and drinks!
And as for love, God wot. I love not yet,
But love I shall, God willing."

And the King—

"Make thee my knight in secret? yea, but
he,

Our noblest brother, and our truest man,
And one with me in all, he needs must
kne."

"Let Lancelot know, my King, let Lancelot
know,
Thy noblest and thy truest!"

And the King—

"But wherefore would ye men should wonder
at you?

Nay, rather for the sake of me, their King,

And the deed's sake my knighthood do the
deed,
Than to be noised of."

Merrily Gareth ask'd,

"Have I not earn'd my cake in baking of
it?

Let be my name until I make my name!
My deeds will speak: it is but for a day."

So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm
Smiled the great King, and half-unwillingly
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to him.

Then, after summoning Lancelot privily,
"I have given him the first quest: he is not
proven.

Look therefore when he calls for this in
hall,

Thou get to horse and follow him far away.
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor
slain."

Then that same day there past into the
hall

A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender
nose

Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower;
She into hall past with her page and cried,

"O King, for thou hast driven the foe with-
out;

See to the foe within! bridge, ford, beset
By bandits, every one that owns a tower
The Lord for half a league. Why sit ye
there?

Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were
king.

Till ev'n the lonest held were all as free
From cursed bloodshed, as thine altar-cloth
From that blest blood it is a sin to spill."

"Comfort thyself," said Arthur, "I nor
mine

Rest: so my knighthood keep the vows they
swore,

The wastest moorland of our realm shall be
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.
What is thy name? thy need?

"My name?" she said—

"Lynette my name; noble; my need, a
knight

To combat for my sister, Lyonors,
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,
And comely, yea, and comelier than myself.
She lives in Castle Perilous: a river
Runs in three loops about her living-place;
And o'er it are three passings, and three
knights

Defend the passings, brethren, and a fourth,
And of that four the mightiest, holds her
stay'd

In her own castle and so besieges her
To break her will, and make her wed with
him;

And but delays his purport till thou send
To do the battle with him, thy chief man
Sir Lancelot whom he trusts to overthrow,
Then wed, with glory; but she will not wed
Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.
Now therefore have I come for Lancelot."

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth ask'd,
"Damsel, ye know this Order lives to crush
All wrongers of the Realm. But say, these
four,
Who be they? What the fashion of the
men?"

"They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,
The fashion of that old knight-errantry
Who ride abroad and do but what they will;
Courteous or bestial from the moment,
Such as have nor law nor king; and three of
these

Proud in their fantasy call themselves the
Day,
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Evening-
Star,
Singing strong fools; and never a whit more
wise

The fourth, who alway rideth arm'd in black,
A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.
He names himself the Night and offener
Death.

And wears a helmet mounted with a skull
And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,
To show that who may slay or scape the
three

Slain by himself shall enter endless night.
And all these four be fools, but mighty men,
And therefore am I come for Lancelot."

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where he
rose,
A head with kindling eyes above the throng,
"A boon, Sir King—this quest!" then—
for he mark'd

Kay near him groaning like a wounded bull—
"Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-
knave am I,

And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I,
And I can topple over a hundred such.
Thy promise, King," and Arthur glancing at
him,

Brought down a momentary brow. "Rough,
sudden,

And pardonable, worthy to be knight—
Go therefore," and all hearers were amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame, pride,
wrath,
Slew the May-white: she lifted either arm,
"Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy chief
knight,
And thou hast given me but a kitchen-
knave."

Then ere a man in hall could stay her, turn'd,
Fled down the lane of access to the King,
Took horse, descended the slope street, and
past

The weird white gate, and paused without,
beside

The field of tourney, murmuring "kitchen-
knave."

Now two great entries open'd from the
hall,

At one end one, that gave upon a range
Of level pavement where the King would
pace

At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood.
And down from this a lordly stairway sloped
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of towers.

And out by this main doorway past the King.
But one was counter to the hearth, and rose
High that the highest-crested helm could ride
Therethro' nor graze: and by this entry fled
The damsel in her wrath, and on to this
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the door
King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a town,
A warhorse of the best, and near it stood
The two that out of north had follow'd him.
This bare a maiden shield, a casque; that held
The horse, the spear; whereat Sir Gareth
loosed

A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to heel,
A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,
And from it like a fuel-smother'd fire,
That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and
flash'd as those

Dust-coated things, that making slide apart
Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there
burns

A jewel'd harness, ere they pass and fly.
So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms.
Then while he donn'd the helm, and took
the shield

And mounted horse and graspt a spear, of
grain

Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and tipt
With trenchant steel, around him slowly prest
The people, and from out of kitchen came
The thralls in throng, and seeing who had
work'd

Lustier than any, and whom they could but
love,

Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and
cried,

"God bless the King, and all his fellow-
ship!"

And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode
Down the slope street, and past without the
gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the cur
Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his
cause

Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being named,
His owner, but remembers all, and growls
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used
To harry and hustle.

"Bound upon a quest
With horse and arms—the King hath past
his time—

My scullion knave! Thralls to your work
again,

For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!
Will there be dawn in West and eve in East?

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Begone! — my knave! — belike and like enow
Some old head-blow not heeded in his youth
So shook his wits he wander in his prime —
Crazed! How the villain lifted up his voice,
Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-knave.
Tut: he was tame and meek enow with me,
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing.
Well — I will after me my loud knave, and learn
Whether he know me for his master yet.
Out of the smoke he came, and so my lance
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the
mire —

Thence, if the King awoken from his craze,
Into the smoke again."

But Lancelot said,
"Kay, wherefore will ye go against the King,
For that did never he whereon ye rail,
But ever meekly served the King in thee?
Abide: take counsel; for this lad is great
And lusty, and knowing both of lance and
sword."

"Tut, tell not me," said Kay, "ye are over-
fine
To mar stout knaves with foolish courtesies."
Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode
Down the slope city, and out beyond the
gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet
Muttered the damsel, "Wherefore did the
King

Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt, at
least

He might have yielded to me one of those
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,
Rather than — O sweet heaven! O fie upon
him —
His kitchen-knave."

To whom Sir Gareth drew
(And there were none but few goodlier than
he)

Shining in arms, "Damsel, the quest is mine.
Lead, and I follow." She thereat, as one

That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the holt,
And deems it carrion of some woodland thing.

Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender nose
With petulant thumb and finger shrilling.

"Hence!
Avoid, thou smelllest all of kitchen-grease.

And look who comes behind," for there was
Kay.

"Knowest thou not me? thy master? I am
Kay.

We lack thee by the hearth."

And Gareth to him,
"Master no more! too well I know thee, ay —
The most ungentle knight in Arthur's hall."

"Have at thee then," said Kay: they
shock'd, and Kay

Fell shoulder-slip, and Gareth cried again,
"Lead, and I follow," and fast away she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly
Behind her, and the heart of her good horse

Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken spcke.

"What doest thou, scullion, in my fellow-
ship?

Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the
more

Or love thee better, that by some device
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,

Thou hast overthrown and slain thy master
— thou! —

Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon! — to
me

Thou smelllest all of kitchen as before."

"Damsel," Sir Gareth answer'd gently,
"say

Whate'er ye will, but whatso'er ye say,
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,
Or die therefor."

"Ay, wilt thou finish it?
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he talks!

The listening rogue hath caught the manner
of it.

But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with,
knave,

And then by such a one that thou for all
The kitchen brews that was ever supt

Shalt not once dare to look him in the face."

"I shall assay," said Gareth with a smile
That madden'd her, and away she flash'd

again
Down the long avenues of a boundless wood,
And Gareth following was again beknaved.

"Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the
only way

Where Arthur's men are set along the wood;
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as leaves:

If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but yet,
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of thine?

Fight, an thou canst: I have miss'd the
only way."

So till the dusk that followed evensong
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled:

Then after one long slope was mounted, saw,
Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand
pines

A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
To westward — in the deeps whereof a mere,

Round as the red eye of an Eagle-owl,
Under the half-dead sunset glared; and cries

Ascending, and there brake a servingman
Flying from out of the black wood, and crying,

"They have bound my lord to cast him in
the mere."

Then Gareth, "Bound am I to right the
wrong'd,

But straightlier bound am I to bide with thee."

And when the damsel spake contemptuously,
"Lead and I follow," Gareth cried again,

"Follow, I lead!" so down among the pines
He plunged, and there, black-shadow'd nigh
the mere.

And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,

Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,
A stone about his neck to drown him in it.
Three with good blows he quieted, but three
Fled thro' the pines; and 'Gareth loosed
the stone
From off his neck, then in the mere beside
Tumbled it; oilly bubbled up the mere.
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free
feet
Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur's friend.

"Well that ye came, or else these caitiff
rogues
Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause
is theirs
To hate me, for my wont hath ever been
To catch my thief, and then like vermin here
Drown him, and with a stone about his neck;
And under this wan water many of them
Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,
And rise, and flickering in a grimly light
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have
saved a life
Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this
wood.
And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.
What guerdon will ye?"

Gareth sharply spake,
"None! for the deed's sake have I done the
deed,
In uttermost obedience to the King.
But will ye yield this damsel harborage?"

Whereat the Baron saying, "I well be-
lieve
Ye be of Arthur's Table," a light laugh
Broke from Lynette, "Ay, truly of a truth,
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-
knave!—
But deem not I accept thee aught the more,
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit
Down on a rout of craven foresters.
A thrasher with his flail had scatter'd them.
Nay—for thou smell'st of the kitchen still.
But an this lord will yield us harborage,
Well."

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,
All in a full-fair manor and a rich,
His towers where that day a feast had been
Held in high hall, and many a viand left,
And many a costly cate, received the three.
And there they placed a peacock in his pride
Before the damsel, and the Baron set
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

"Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, on my side.
Hear me—this morn I stood in Arthur's
hall,
And pray'd the King would grant me Lance-
lot
To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night—
The last a monster unsubduable
Of any save of him for whom I call'd—
Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,
'The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I,

And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks
am I.'
Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,
'Go therefore,' and so gives the quest to
him—
Him—here—a villain fitter to stick swine
Than ride abroad redressing women's wrong,
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman."

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the
lord
Now look'd at one and now at other, left
The damsel by the peacock in his pride,
And, seating Gareth at another board,
Sat down beside him, ate and then began.

"Friend, whether ye be kitchen-knave, or
not,
Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,
And whether she be mad, or else the King,
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
I ask not: but thou strikest a strong stroke,
For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,
And savor of my life; and therefore now,
For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh
Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,
The savor of my life."

And Gareth said,
"Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,
Despite of Day and Night and Death and
Hell."

So when, next morn, the lord whose life he
saved
Had, some brief space, convey'd them on
their way
And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth
spake,
"Lead and I follow." Haughtily she re-
plied,

"I fly no more: I allow thee for an hour.
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,
In time of flood. Nay, futhermore, me-
thinks
Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt thou,
fool?"

For hard by here is one will overthrow
And slay thee: then will I to court again,
And shame the King for only yielding me
My champion from the ashes of his hearth."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd courteously,
"Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find
My fortunes all as fair as hers, who lay
Among the ashes and wedded the King's
son."

Then to the shore of one of those long
loops
Where thro' the serpent river coll'd, they
came.
Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep;
the stream

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and thou wilt find
ers, who lay
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one of those long
river coil'd, they
banks and steep;

Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc
Took at a leap; and on the further side
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in hue,
Save that the dome was purple, and above,
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.
And therefore the lawless warrior paced
Unarm'd, and calling, "Damsel, is this he,
The champion ye have brought from
Arthur's hall?"

For whom we let thee pass," "Nay, nay,"
she said,

"Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter
scorn

Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee
here

His kitchen-knave: and look thou to thyself:
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
And slay thee unarm'd: he is not knight but
knave."

Then at his call, "O daughters of the
Dawn,

And servants of the Morning-Star, approach,
Arm me," from out the silken curtain-folds
Barefooted and bareheaded three fair girls
In gilt and rosy raiment came: their feet
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair
All over glanc'd with dewdrop or with gem
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.
These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave a
shield

Blue also, and thereon the morning star.
And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was
brought,
Glorying; and in the stream beneath him,
shone,
Immingled with Heaven's azure waveringly,
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watch'd him, "Wherefore
stare ye so?"

Thou shakest in thy fear: there yet is time:
Flee down the valley before he get to horse.
Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight
but knave."

Said Gareth, "Damsel, whether knave or
knight,

Far liefer had I fight a score of times
Than hear thee so missay me and revile.
Fair words were best for him who fights for
thee;

But truly foul are better, for they send
That strength of anger thro' mine arms, I
know

That I shall overthrow him."

And he that bore
The star, being mounted, cried from o'er the
bridge,

"A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me!
Such fight not I, but answer scorn with scorn.
For this were shame to do him further wrong
Than set him on his feet, and take his horse
And arms, and so return him to the King."

Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly,
knave.

Avoid: for it besemeth not a knave
To ride with such a lady."

"Dog, thou liest.
I spring from loftier lineage than thine
own."

He spake; and all at fiery speed the two
Shock'd on the central bridge, and either
spear

Bent but not brake, and either knight at once,
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult

Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,
Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,

And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his brand
Hurl'd his enemy backward down the
bridge,

The damsel crying, "Well-stricken, kitchen-
knave!"

Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but one
stroke

Laid him that clove it grovelling on the
ground.

Then cried the fall'n, "Take not my life:
I yield."

And Gareth, "So this damsel ask it of me
Good — I accord it easily as a grace."

She reddening, "Insolent scullion: I of
thee?"

I bound to thee for any favor ask'd!"

"Then shall he die." And Gareth the
unlaced

His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,
"Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay
One nobler than thyself." "Damsel, thy
charge

Is an abounding pleasure to me. Knight,
Thy life is thine at her command. Arise

And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See
thou crave

His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.
Myself, when I return, will plead for thee.

Thy shield is mine — farewell; and, damsel,
thou

Lead, and I follow."

And fast away she fled.

Then when he came upon her, spake,
"Methought,

Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on the
bridge

The savor of thy kitchen came upon me
A little faintlier: but the wind hath changed:
I scent it twentyfold."

And then she sang,
"O morning star! (not that tall felon there
Whom thou by sorcery or unhappiness
Or some device, hast foully overthrown),
O morning star that smilest in the blue,
O star, my morning dream hath proven true,
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled on
me."

"But thou begone, take counsel, and
away,

For hard by here is one that guards a ford —

The second brother in their fool's parable —
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.
Care not for shame: thou art not knight but
knave."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laugh-
ingly,
"Parables? Hear a parable of the knave.
When I was kitchen-knave among the rest
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my co-
mates
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his
coat,
'Guard it,' and there was none to meddle
with it.
And such a coat art thou, and thee the
King
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,
To worry, and not to flee — and — knight or
knave —
The knave that doth thee service as full
knight
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
Toward thy sister's freeing."

"Ay, Sir Knave!
Ay, knave, because thou strik'st as a knight,
Being but knave, I hate thee all the more."

"Fair damsel, ye should worship me the
more,
That, being but knave, I throw thine en-
emies."

"Ay, ay," she said, "but thou shalt meet
thy match."

So when they touch'd the second river-
loop,
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noonday
Sun
Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower,
That blows a globe of after arrowlets,
Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the
fierce shield,
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots
Before them when he turn'd from watching
him.
He from beyond the roaring shallow roar'd,
"What doest thou, brother, in my marches
here?"
And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,
"Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's hall
Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his
arms."
"Ugh!" cried the Sun, and vizoring up a
red
And cipher face of rounded foolishness,
Push'd horse across the foamings of the ford,
Whom Gareth met midstream; no room was
there
For lance or tourney-skill: four strokes they
struck
With sword, and these were mighty; the
new knight
Had fear he might be shamed; but as the
Sun

Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the
fifth,
The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream, the
stream
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the
ford;
So drew him home; but he that would not
fight,
As being all bone-battered on the rock,
Yielded; and Gareth sent him to the King.
"Myself when I return will plead for thee.
Lead, and I follow." Quietly she led.
"Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed
again?"
"Nay, not a point: nor art thou victor here.
There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;
His horse thereon stumbled — ay, for I saw
it.

"O Sun' (not this strong fool whom
thou, Sir Knave,
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness),
'O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on
me.'

"What knowest thou of lovesong or of
love?
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly born,
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, per-
chance, —

"O dewy flowers that open to the sun,
O dewy flowers that close when day is done,
Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on
me.'

"What knowest thou of flowers, except,
belike,
To garnish meats with? hath not our good
King
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom,
A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye
round
The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's
head?
Flowers? nay, the boar hath rosemaries and
bay.

"O birds, that warble to the morning
sky,
O birds that warble as the day goes by,
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on
me.'

"What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis,
merle,
Linnet? what dream ye when they utter
forth
May-music growing with the growing light,
Their sweet sun-worship? these be for the
snare
(So runs thy fancy) these be for the spit,
Larding and basting. See thou have not
now

Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly.
There stands the third fool of their allegory."

For there beyond a bridge of treble bow,
All in a rose-red from the west, and all
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the
knight,
That named himself the Star of Evening,
stood.

And Gareth, "Wherefore waits the mad-
man there
Naked in open dayshine?" "Nay," she
cried,
"Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins
That fit him like his own; and so ye cleave
His armor off him, these will turn the
blade."

Then the third brother shouted o'er the
bridge,
"O brother-star, why shine ye here so low?
Thy ward is higher up: but have ye slain
The damsel's champion?" and the damsel
cried,

"No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's
heaven
With all disaster unto thine and thee!
For both thy younger brethren have gone
down
Before this youth; and so wilt thou, Sir
Star:
Art thou not old?"

"Old, damsel, old and hard,
boys."
Said Gareth, "Old, and over-bold in brag!
But that same strength which threw the
Morning-Star
Can throw the Evening."

Then that other blew
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.
"Approach and arm me!" With slow steps
from out

An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stain'd
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,
And arm'd him in old arms, and brought a
helm.

With but a drying evergreen for crest,
And gave a shield whereon the Star of
Even
Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his emblem,
shone.

But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-bow,
They madly hurl'd together on the bridge,
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,
There met him drawn, and overthrew him
again.

But up like fire he started: and as oft
As Gareth brought him grovelling on his
knees,
So many a time he vaulted up again;
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great heart,
Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,

Labor'd within him, for he seem'd as one
That all in later, sadder age begins
To war against ill uses of a life,
But these from all his life arise, and cry,
"Thou hast made us lords, and canst not put
us down!"

He half despaired; so Gareth seem'd to strike
Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the while,
"Well done, knave-knight, well-stricken, O
good knight-knave—
O knave, as noble as any of all the knights—
Shame me not, shame me not. I have
prophesied—

Strike, thou art worthy of the Table Round—
His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd
blade—
Strike—strike—the wind will never change
again."

And Gareth, hearing ever stronger amote,
And hew'd great pieces of his armor off him,
But lash'd in vain against the harden'd skin,
And could not wholly bring him under, more
The loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge on
ridge,

The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and
springs
Forever; till at length Sir Gareth's brand
Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the hilt.
"I have thee now"; but forth that other
sprang,

And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry arms
Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,
Strangled, but straining ev'n his uttermost
Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the
bridge

Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,
"Lead, and I follow."

But the damsel said,
"I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-knaves."

"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,
O rainbow with three colors after rain,
Shine sweetly: thrice my love hath smiled
on me."

"Sir,—and, good faith, I fain had added
—Knight,

But that I heard thee call thyself a knave,—
Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,
Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought the
King

Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy pardon,
friend,

For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,
And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal
As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,
Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what thou art."

"Damsel," he said, "ye be not all to
blame,

Saving that ye mistrusted our good King
Would handle scorn, or yield thee, asking, one
Not fit to cope thy quest. Ye said you say;
Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth I
hold

He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor
 meet
 To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets
 His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat
 At any gentle damsel's waywardness.
 Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings fought
 for me:
 And seeing now thy words are fair, methinks,
 There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his
 great self,
 Hath force to quell me."

Nigh upon that hour
 When the lone hern forgets his melancholy,
 Lets down his other leg, and stretching
 dreams
 Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
 Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at him,
 And told him of a cavern hard at hand,
 Where bread and baken meats and good red
 wine
 Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors
 Had sent her coming champion, waited him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein
 Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on
 horse
 Sculptured, and deckt in slowly waning hues.
 "Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was
 here,
 Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the rock
 The war of Time against the soul of man.
 And you four fools have suck'd their allegory
 From these damp walls, and taken but the
 form.

Know ye not these?" and Gareth lookt and
 read—

In letters like to those the vexillary
 Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming
 Gelt—

"PHOSPHORUS," then "MERIDIES" —
 "HESPERUS" —

"Nox" — "MORS," beneath five figures,
 armed men,
 Slab after slab, their faces forward all,
 And running down the Soul, a Shape that fled
 With broken wings, torn raiment and loose
 hair,

For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.
 "Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,
 Who comes behind?"

For one — delay'd at first
 Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay
 To Camelot, then by what thereafter chanced,
 The damsel's headlong error thro' the wood —
 Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-loops —
 His blue shield-lions cover'd — softly drew
 Behind the twain, and when he saw the star
 Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him, cried,
 "Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my
 friend."

And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry;
 But when they closed — in a moment — at
 one touch

Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the
 world —
 Went sliding down so easily, and fell,

That when he found the grass within his
 hands

He laugh'd; the laughter jarr'd upon Ly-
 nette:

Harshly she ask'd him, "Shamed and over-
 thrown,

And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,
 Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast in
 vain?"

"Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son
 Of old King Lot and good Queen Bellicent,
 And victor of the bridges and the ford,
 And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by
 whom

I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness —
 Device and sorcery and unhappiness —
 Out, sword; we are thrown!" and Lancelot
 answered, "Prince,

O Gareth — thro' the mere unhappiness
 Of one who came to help thee not to harm,
 Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole,
 As on the day when Arthur knighted him."

Then Gareth, "Thou — Lancelot! — thine
 the hand
 That threw me? An some chance to mar
 the boast

Thy brethren of these make — which could
 not chance —

Had sent thee down before a lesser spear
 Shamed had I been and sad — O Lancelot —
 thou!"

Whereat the maiden, petulant, "Lancelot,
 Why came ye not, when call'd? and where-
 fore now

Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my knave,
 Who being still rebuked, would answer still
 Courteous as any knight — but now, if knight,
 The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd and
 trick'd,

And only wondering wherefore play'd upon:
 And doubtful whether I and mine be scorn'd.
 Where should be truth if not in Arthur's hall,
 In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave, prince
 and fool,

I hate thee and forever."

And Lancelot said,
 "Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight art
 thou

To the King's best wish. O damsel, be ye
 wise

To call him shamed, who is but overthrown?
 Thrown have I been, nor once, but many a
 time.

Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,
 And overthrower from being overthrown.
 With sword we have not striven; and thy
 good horse

And thou art weary; yet not less I felt
 Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance of
 thine.

Well hast thou done: for all the stream is
 freed,

And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his foes,
 And when reviled, hast answer'd graciously,

the grass within his
 hter jarr'd upon Ly-

"Shamed and over-

the kitchen-knave,
 and blew your boast in

ut that I, the son
 of Queen Bellicent,
 es and the ford,
 here lie thrown by

ere unhappiness —
 unhappiness —
 own!" and Lancelot

ere unhappiness
 p thee not to harm,
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 thur knighted him."

— Lancelot! — thine

ome chance to mar

make — which could

ore a lesser spear

ad — O Lancelot —

petulant, "Lancelot,

can call'd? and where-

gloried in my knave,

would answer still

— but now, if knight,

aves me fool'd and

erefore play'd upon:

nd mine be scorn'd.

not in Arthur's hall,

night, knave, prince

And Lancelot said,

Gareth! knight art

n. O damsel, be ye

is but overthrown?

or once, but many a

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s justice on his foes,

nswer'd graciously,

And maketh merry, when overthrown. Prince,
 Knight,
 Hail, Knight and Prince, and of our Table
 Round!"

And then when turning to Lynette he told
 The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said,
 "Ay well — ay well — for worse than being
 fool'd

Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,
 Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and
 drinks

And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.
 But all about it flies a honeysuckle.
 Seek, till we find." And when they sought

and found,
 Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life
 Past into sleep; on whom the maiden gazed.

"Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to
 sleep hast thou.

Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to him
 As any mother? Ay, but such a one
 As all day long hath rated at her child,

And vext his day, but blesses him asleep —
 Good lord, how sweetly smells the honey-
 suckle

In the hush'd night, as if the world were one
 Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness!
 O Lancelot, Lancelot!" — and she clapt her

hands —
 "Full merry am I to find my goodly knave
 Is knight and noble. See now, sworn have I,

Else yon black felon had not let me pass,
 To bring thee back to do the battle with him.
 Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first:

Who doubts thee victor? so will my knight-
 knave

Miss the full flower of this accomplishment."

Said Lancelot, "Peradventure he, ye
 name,

May know my shield. Let Gareth, an he
 will,

Change his for mine, and take my charger,
 fresh,

Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as well
 As he that rides him." "Lancelot-like," she
 said,

"Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in
 all."

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely clutch'd
 the shield;

"Ramp, ye lance-splintering lions, on whom
 all spears

Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to roar!
 Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your lord! —
 Care not, good beasts, so well I care for
 you.

O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these
 Streams virtue — fire — thro' one that will
 not shame

Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.
 Hence: let us go.

They traversed. Silent the silent field
 mer-wan, Arthur's harp tho' sum-

In counter motion to the clouds, allured
 The glance of Gareth dreaming on his liege.
 A star shot: "Lo," said Gareth, "the foe
 falls!"

An owl whoopt: "Hark the victor pealing
 there!"

Suddenly she that rode upon his left
 Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent him,

crying,
 "Yield, yield him this again: 't is he must
 fight:

I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday
 Reviled thee, and hath wrought on Lancelot now

To lend thee horse and shield: wonders ye
 have done;

Miracles ye cannot: here is glory enow
 In having flung thee three: I see thee maim'd,
 Mangled: I swear thou canst not fling thee
 fourth."

"And wherefore, damsel? tell me all ye
 know.

Ye cannot scare me; nor rough face, or voice,
 Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery
 Appall me from the quest."

"Nay, Prince," she cried,
 "God wot, I never look'd upon the face,
 Seeing he never rides abroad by day;

But watch'd him have I like a phantom pass
 Chilling the night: nor have I heard the
 voice.

Always he made his mouthpiece of a page
 Who came and went, and still reported him
 As closing in himself the strength of ten,

And when his anger tare him, massacring
 Man, woman, lad and girl — yea, the soft
 babe —

Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant
 flesh,

Monster! O prince, I went for Lancelot first,
 The quest is Lancelot's: give him back the
 shield."

Said Gareth laughing, "An he fight for
 this,

Belike he wins it as the better man:
 Thus — and not else?"

But Lancelot on him urged
 All the deavings of their chivalry
 Where one might meet a mightier than him-
 self;

How best to manage horse, lance, sword and
 shield,

And so fill up the gap where force might fail
 With skill and fineness. Instant were his
 words.

Then Gareth, "Here be rules. I know
 but one —

To dash against mine enemy and to win.
 Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the joust,
 And seen thy way." "Heaven help thee,"
 sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud that
 grew

To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they
rode

In converse till she made her palfrey halt,
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd,
"There."

And all the three were silent seeing, pitch'd
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak
Sunder the glooming crimson on the marge,
Black, with black banner, and a long black
horn

Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth graspt,
And so, before the two could hinder him,
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the
horn.

Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled; anon
Came lights and lights, and once again he
blew;

Whereon were hollow tramlings up and
down

And muffled voices heard, and shadows past;
Till high above him, circled with her maids,
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,
Beautiful among lights, and waving to him
White hands, and courtesy; but when the
Prince

Three times had blown—after long hush—
at last—

The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
Thro' those black foldings, that which housed
therein.

High on a nightblack horse, in nightblack
arms,

With white breast-bone, and barren ribs of
Death,

And crown'd with fleshless laughter—some
ten steps—

In the half light—through the dim dawn—
advanced

The monster, and then paused, and spake
no word.

But Gareth spake and all indignantly,
"Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength
of ten,

Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God hath
given,

But must, to make the terror of thee more,
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries
Of that which Life hath done with, and the
clod,

Less dull than thou, will hide with mantling
flowers

As if for pity?" But he spake no word;
Which set the horror higher: a maiden
swoon'd;

The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and
wept,

As doom'd to be the bride of Night and
Death;

Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his helm;
And ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm blood
felt

Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were
aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely
neigh'd—

At once the black horse bounded forward
with him.

Then those that did not blink the terror,
saw

That Death was cast to ground, and slowly
rose.

But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the
skull.

Half fell to right and half to left and lay.
Then with a stronger buffet he clove the
helm

As thoroughly as the skull; and out from
this

Issued the bright face of a blooming boy,
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying,

"Knight,
Slay me not: my three brethren bad me do
it,

To make a horror all about the house,
And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.

They never dream'd the passes would be
past."

Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one
Not many a moon his younger, "My fair
child,

What madness made thee challenge the
chief knight

Of Arthur's hall?" "Fair Sir, they bad me
do it.

They hate the King, and Lancelot, the
King's friend,

They hoped to slay him somewhere on the
stream,

They never dream'd the passes could be
past."

Then sprang the happier day from under-
ground:

And Lady Lyonors and her house, with
dance

And revel and song, made merry over Death,
As being after all their foolish fears

And horrors only prov'n a blooming boy.
So large mirth lived, and Gareth won the
quest

And he that told the tale in older times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,

But he, that told it later, says Lynette.

THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in his
moods
Had made mock-knight of Arthur's Table
Round,
At Camelot, high above the yellowing woods,
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the Hall.
And toward him from the Hall, with harp in
hand,
And from the crown thereof a carcanet
Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize
Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,
Came Tristram, saying, "Why skip ye so,
Sir Fool?"

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding once
Far down beneath a winding wall of rock
Heard a child wail. A stump of oak half-
dead,
From roots like some black coil of carven
snakes

Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro' mid-
air
Bearing an eagle's nest; and thro' the tree
Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro' the
wind
Pierced ever a child's cry: and crag and
tree

Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the perilous nest,
This ruby necklace thrice around her neck,
And all unscarr'd from beak or talon,
brought

A maiden babe; which Arthur pitying took,
Then gave it to his Queen to rear: the
Queen

But coldly acquiescing, in her white arms
Received, and after loved it tenderly,
And named it Nestling; so forgot herself
A moment, and her cares; till that young
life

Being smitten in mid-heaven with mortal
cold

Past from her; and in time the carcanet
Vext her with plaintive memories of the
child:

So she, delivering it to Arthur, said,
"Take thou the jewels of this dead inno-
cence,
And make them, an thou wilt, a tourney-
prize."

To whom the King, "Peace to thine
eagle-borne
Dead nestling, and this honor after death,
Following thy will! but, O my Queen, I
muse

Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or zone,
Those diamonds that I rescued from the
tarn,
And Lancelot won, nethought, for thee to
wear."

"Would rather ye had let them fall," she
cried,
"Plunge and be lost — ill-fated as they
were,
A bitterness to me! — ye look amazed,
Not knowing they were lost as soon as
given —
Slid from my hands, when I was leaning
out
Above the river — that unhappy child
Past in her barge: but rosier luck will go
With these rich jewels, seeing that they
came
Not from the skeleton of a brother-slayer,
But the sweet body of a maiden babe.
Perchance — who knows? — the purest of
thy knights
May win them for the purest of my maids."

She ended, and the cry of a great jousts
With trumpet-blowings ran on all the ways
From Camelot in among the faded fields
To furthest towers; and everywhere the
knights
Arm'd for a day of glory before the King.

But on the hither side of that loud morn
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage ribb'd
From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals, his
nose

Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one hand
off,
And one with shatter'd fingers dangling
lame,

A churl, to whom indignantly the King,
"My churl, for whom Christ died, what
evil beast

Hath drawn his claws athwart thy face? or
fiend?

Man was it who marr'd Heaven's image in
thee thus?"

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of splin-
ter'd teeth,
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with blunt
stump

Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said the
maim'd churl,

"He took them and he drave them to his
tower —

Some hold he was a table-knight of thine —
A hundred goodly ones — the Red Knight,
he —

Lord, I was tending swine, and the Red
Knight

Brake in upon me and drave them to his
tower;

And when I call'd upon thy name as one
That doest right by gentle and by churl,

Maim'd me and maul'd, and would outright
have slain,
Save that he swore me to a message, say-
ing —
'Tell thou the King and all his liars, that I
Have founded my Round Table in the
North,
And whatsoever his own knights have sworn
My knights have sworn the counter to it —
and say
My tower is full of harlots, like his court,
But mine are worthier, seeing they profess
To be none other than themselves — and
say
My knights are all adulterers like his own,
But mine are truer, seeing they profess
To be none other; and say his hour is
come,
The heathen are upon him, his long lance
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw.'"

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the seneschal,
"Take thou my churl, and tend him curi-
ously
Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be whole.
The heathen — but that ever-climbing wave,
Hurl'd back again so often in empty foam,
Hath lain for years at rest — and renegades,
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confusion,
whom
The wholesome realm is purged of other-
where, —
Friends, thro' your manhood and your
fidelity, — now
Make their last head like Satan in the
North.
My younger knights, new-made, in whom
your flower
Waits to be solid fruit of golden deeds,
Move with me toward their quelling, which
achieved,
The loneliest ways are safe from shore to
shore.
But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my place
Enchair'd to-morrow, arbitrate the field;
For wherefore shouldst thou care to mingle
with it.

Only to yield my Queen her own again?
Spea'k, Lancelot, thou art silent: is it well?"

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd, "It is
well:

Yet better if the King abide, and leave
The leading of his younger knights to me.
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is well."

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot follow'd
him,
And while they stood without the doors, the
King

Turn'd to him saying, "Is it then so well?
Or mine the blame that oft I seem? he
Of whom was written, 'a sound is in his
ears' —

The foot that loiters, bidden go, — the
glance

That only seems half-loyal to command, —
A manner somewhat fall'n from reverence —

Or have I dream'd the bearing of our knights
Tells of a manhood ever less and lower?
Or whence the fear lest this my realm, up-
rear'd,
By noble deeds at one with noble vows,
From flat confusion and brute violence,
Reel back into the beast, and be no more?"

He spoke, and taking all his younger
knights,
Down the slope city rode, and sharply turn'd
North by the gate. In her high bower the
Queen,
Working a tapestry, lifted up her head,
Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not that
she sigh'd.
Then ran across her memory the strange
rhyme
Of bygone Merlin, "Where is he who knows?
From the great deep to the great deep he
goes."

But when the morning of a tournament,
By these in earnest those in mockery call'd
The Tournament of the Dead Innocence,
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lancelot,
Round whose sick head all night, like birds
of prey,
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd, arose,
And down a streetway hung with folds of
pure
White samite, and by fountains running
wine,
Where children sat in white with cups of
gold,
Moved to the lists, and there, with slow sad
steps
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd chair.

He glanced and saw the stately galleries,
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of their
Queen
White-robed in honor of the stainless child,
And some with scatter'd jewels, like a bank
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of fire.
He look'd but once, and veil'd his eyes again.

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a dream
To ears but half-awaked, then one low roll
Of Autumn thunder, and the jousts began:
And ever the wind blew, and yellowing leaf
And gloom and gleam, and shower and shorn
plume

Went down it. Sighing wearily, as one
Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,
When all the goodlier guests are past away,
Sat their great umpire, looking o'er the lists.
He saw the laws that ruled the tournament
Broken, but spake not; once, a bright cast
down

Before his throne of arbitration cur'd
The dead babe and the follies of the King;
And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,
And show'd him, like a vermin in his hole,
Modred, a narrow face; anon he heard
The voice that billow'd round the barriers
roar
An ocean-sounding welcome to one knight,

hearing of our knights
less and lower?
at this my realm, up-

with noble vows,
brute violences,
t, and be no more?"

ing all his younger

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the jousts began:
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and shower and shorn

wearily, as one
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ed the tournament
once, in the light cast

ration cur'd
lles of the King;
helmet crack'd,
ermir in its hole,
anol, no heard
round the barriers
me to one knight,

But newly enter'd, taller than the rest,
And armor'd all in forest green, whereon
There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,
And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,
With ever-scattering berries, and on shield
A spear, a harp, a bugle — Tristram — late
From overseas in Brittany return'd,
And marriage with a princess of that realm,
Isolt the White — Sir Tristram of the
Woods —

Whom Lancelot knew, had held sometime
with pain

His own against him, and now yearn'd to
shake

The burthen off his heart in one full-shock
With Tristram ev'n to death: his strong
hands gript

And dinted the gilt dragons right and left,
Until he groan'd for wrath — so many of
those,

That ware their ladies' colors on the casque,
Drew from before Sir Tristram to the bounds,
And there with gibes and flickering mock-
eries

Stood, while he mutter'd, "Craven crests!
O shame!

What faith have these in whom they swear
to love?

The glory of our Round Table is no more."

So Tristram won, and Lancelot gave, the
gems,
Not speaking other word than "Hast thou
won?"

Art thou the purest, brother? See, the hand
Wherewith thou takest is red!" to whom
Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's lan-
guorous mood,

Made answer, "Ay, but wherefore toss me
this

Like a dry bone cast to some hungry hound;
Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy. Strength
of heart

And might of limb, but mainly use and skill,
Are winners in this pastime of our King.
My hand — belike the lance hath dript upon
it —

No blood of mine, I trow; but O chief
knight,

Right arm of Arthur in the battlefield,
Great brother, thou nor I have made the
world;

Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine."

And Tristram round the gallery made his
horse
Caracole; then bow'd his homage, bluntly
saying,

"Fair damsels, each to him who worships
each

Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, behold
This day my Queen of Beauty is not here."
Then most of these were mute, some an-
ger'd, one

Murmuring "All courtesy is dead," and
one,

"The glory of our Round Table is no more."

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt and
mantle clung,

And pettish cries awoke, and the wan day
Went glooming down in wet and weariness:
But under her black brows a swarthy dame
Laught shrilly, crying "Praise the patient
saints,

Our one white day of Innocence hath past,
Tho' somewhat dragged at the skirt. So be
it.

The snowdrop only, flow'ring thro' the year,
Would make the world as blank as winter-
tide.

Come — let us comfort their sad eyes, our
Queen's

And Lancelot's, at this night's solemnity
With all the kindlier colors of the field."

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the feast,
Variously gay: for he that tells the tale
Likend them, saying "as when an hour of
cold

Falls on the mour'n in midsummer snows,
And all the purple slopes of mountain flowers
Pass under white, till the warm hour returns
With veer of wind, and all are flowers
again";

So dame and damsel cast the simple white,
And glowing in all colors, the live grass,
Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup, poppy,
glanced

About the revels, and with mirth so loud
Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the Queen,
And wroth at Tristram and the lawless
jousts,

Brake up their sports, then slowly to her
bower

Parted, and in her bosom pain was lord.

And little Dagonet on the morrow morn,
High over all the yellowing Autumn-tide,
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall.
Then Tristram saying, "Why skip ye so,
Sir Fool?"

Wheel'd round on either heel, Dagonet re-
plied,

"Belike for lack of wiser company;
Or being fool, and seeing too much wit
Makes the world rotten, why, belike I skip
To know myself the wisest knight of all."

"Ay, fool," said Tristram, "but 't is eating
dry

To dance without a catch. roundelay
To dance to." Then he wangled on his
harp.

And while he twangled little Dagonet stood,
Quiet as any water-sodden log

Stay'd in the wandering warble of a brook;
But when the twangling ended, skipt again;
Then being ask'd, "Why skipt ye not, Sir
Fool?"

Made answer, "I had liefer twenty years
Skip to the broken music of my brains
Than any broken music ye can make."

Then Tristram, waiting for the quip to come,
"Good now, what music have I broken,
fool?"

And little Dagonet, skipping, "Arthur, the king's;
For when thou playest that air with Queen Isolt,

Thou makest broken music with thy bride,
Her daintier namesake down in Britany—
And so thou breakest Arthur's music too."
"Save for that broken music in thy brains,
Sir Fool," said Tristram, "I would break thy head.

Fool, I came late, the heathen wars were o'er,
The life had flown, we swore but by the shell—

I am but a fool to reason with a fool.
Come, thou art crabb'd and sour: but lean me down,
Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses' ears,
And hearken if my music be not true.

"Free love—free field—we love but while we may:
The woods are hush'd, their music is no more:

The leaf is dead, the yearning past away:
New leaf, new life—the days of frost are o'er:

New life, new love to suit the newer day:
New loves are sweet as those that went before:

Free love—free field—we love but while we may."

"Ye might have moved slow-measure to my tune,
Not stood stockstill. I made it in the woods,
And found it ring as true as tested gold."

But Dagonet with one foot poised in his hand,

"Friend, did ye mark that fountain yesterday

Made to run wine?—but this had run itself
All out like a long life to a sour end—
And them that round it sat with golden cups
To hand the wine to whomsoever came—
The twelve small damosels white as Innocence,

In honor of poor Innocence the babe,
Who left the gems which Innocence the Queen

Lent to the King, and Innocence the King
Gave for a prize—and one of those white alips

Handed her cup and piped, the pretty one,
'Drink, drink, Sir Fool,' and thereupon I drank,

Spat—pish—the cup was gold, the draught was mud."

And Tristram, "Was it muddier than thy gibe?"

Is all the laughter gone dead out of thee?—
Not marking how the knighthood mock thee, fool—

'Fear God: honor the king—his one true knight—

Sole follower of the vow—for here be they

Who knew thee swine enow before I came,
Smuttier than blasted grain: but when the King

Had made thee fool, thy vanity so shot up
It frighted all free fool from out thy heart:
Which left thee less than fool, and less than swine,
A naked aught—yet swine I hold thee still,
For I have hung thee pearls, and find thee swine."

And little Dagonet mincing with his feet,
"Knight, an ye fling those rubies round my neck

In lieu of hers, I'll hold thou hast some touch

Of music, since I care not for thy pearls.
Swine? I have wallow'd, I have wash'd—the world

Is flesh and shadow—I have had my day.
The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind
Hath foul'd me—an I wallow'd, then I wash'd—

I have had my day and my philosophies—
And thank the Lord I am King Arthur's fool."

Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses, rams and geese

Troop'd round a Paynim harper once, who thrumm'd

On such a wire as musically as thou
Some such fine song—but never a king's fool."

And Tristram, "Then were swine, goats, asses, geese

The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim bard
Had such a mastery of his mystery

That he could harp his wife up out of Hell."

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball of his foot,

"And whither harp'st thou thine? down! and thyself

Down! and two more: a helpful harper thou,

That harpest downward! Dost thou know the star

We call the harp of Arthur up in heaven?"

And Tristram, "Ay, Sir Fool; for when our King

Was victor wellnigh day by day, the knights,
Glorying in each new glory, set his name
High on all hills, and in the signs of heaven."

And Dagonet answer'd, "Ay, and when the land

Was freed, and the Queen false, ye set yourself

To babble about him, all to the loss of your wit—
And whether he were king by courtesy,

Or king by right—and so went harping down

The black king's hound got so far, and grew

So witty, that ye play at ducks and drakes

now before I came,
rain: but when the

vanity so shot up
from out thy heart:
a fool, and less than

ine I hold thee still,
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old thou hast some
et for thy pearls.

I, I have wash'd —
have had my day.

ence, in her kind
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Dost thou know

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Sir Fool; for when

by day, the knights,
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the signs of heaven."
d, "Ay, and when

n false, ye set your-
to thy wit —

g, thy courtesy,
went harping

ot so far, and
et ducks and drakes

With Arthur's vows on the great lake of
fire.

Tuwhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the star?"
"Nay, fool," said Tristram, "not in open
day."

And Dagonet, "Nay, nor will: I see it and
hear."

It makes a silent music up in heaven,
And I, and Arthur and the angels hear,
And then we skip." "Lo, fool," he said,
"ye talk

Fool's treason: is the king thy brother
fool?"

Then little Dagonet clapt his hands and
shrill'd.

"Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of fools!
Conceits himself as God that he can make
Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles, milk
From burning spurge, honey from hornet-
combs,

And men from beasts. — Long live the king
of fools!"

And down the city Dagonet danced away.
But thro' the slowly-mellowing avenues
And solitary passes of the wood
Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and the
west.

Before him fled the face of Queen Isolt
With ruby-circled neck, but evermore
Fast, as a rustle or twitter in the wood
Made dull his inner, keen his outer eye
For all that walk'd, or crept, or perched, or
flew.

Anon the face, as, when a gust hath
blown,

Unruffling waters re-collect the shape
Of one that in them sees himself, return'd;
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,
Or ev'n a fall'n feather, vanish'd again.

So on for all that day from lawn to lawn
Thro' many a league-long bower he rode. At
length

A lodge of intertwined beechen-boughs
Furze-cramm'd, and bracken-rooft, the which
himself

Built for a summer day with Queen Isolt
Against a shower, dark in the golden grove
Appearing, sent his fancy back to where
She lived a moon in that low lodge with
him:

Till Mark her lord had past, the Cornish
king,

With six or seven, when Tristram was away,
And snatch'd her thence; yet dreading worse
than shame

Her warrior Tristram, spake not any word,
But bode his hour, devising wretchedness.

And now that desert lodge to Tristram
lookt

So sweet, that, halting, in he past, and sank
Down on a drift of foliage random-blown;
But could not rest for musing how to smooth
And sleek his marriage over to the Queen.
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all

The tonguesters of the court she had not
heard.

But then what folly had sent him overseas
After she left him lonely here? a name?

Was it the name of one in Brittany,
Isolt, the daughter of the King? "Isolt
Of the white hands" they call'd her: the
sweet name

Allured him first, and then the maid herself,
Who served him well with those white hands
of hers,

And loved him well, until himself had thought
He loved her also, wedded easily,

But left her all as easily, and return'd.
The black-blue Irish hair and Irish eyes
Had drawn him home — what marvel? then
he laid

His brows upon the drifted leaf and dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of Brittany
Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,
And show'd them both the ruby-chain, and
both

Began to struggle for it, till his Queen
Graspt it so hard, that all her hand was red.
Then cried the Breton, "Look, her hand is
red!"

These be no rubies, this is frozen blood,
And melts within her hand — her hand is
hot

With ill desires, but this I gave thee, look,
Is all as cool and white as any flower."

Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and then
A whimpering of the spirit of the child,
Because the twain had spoil'd her carcanet.

He dream'd; but Arthur with a hundred
spears

Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,
And many a glancing plash and sawlowsale,
The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty marsh
Glared on a huge machicolated tower
That stood with open doors, whereout was
roll'd

A roar of riot, as from men secure
Amid their marshes, ruffians at their ease
Among their harlot-brides, an evil song.

"Lo there," said one of Arthur's youth, for
there,

High on a grim dead tree before the fower,
A goodly brother of The Table Round

Swung by the neck: and on the boughs a
shield

Showing a shower of blood in a field noir,
And there beside a horn, inflamed the knights
At that dishonor done the gilded spur,

Till each would clash the shield, and blow
the horn.

But Arthur waved them back: alone he rode.
Then at the dry harsh roar of the great horn,
That sent the face of all the marsh aloft

An ever upward-rushing storm and cloud
Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight heard,
and all,

Even to tipmost lance and topmost helm,
In blood-red armor sallying, howl'd to the
King,

"The teeth of Hell flay bare and gnash thee flat!"

Lo! art thou not that eunuch-hearted King
Who fain had clipt free manhood from the
world—

The woman-worshipper? Yea, God's curse,
and I!

Slain was the brother of my paramour
By a knight of thine, and I that heard her
whine

And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,
Swore by the scorpion-worm that twists in
hell,

And stings itself to everlasting death,
To hang whatever knight of thine I fought
And tumbled. Art thou King?—Look to
thy life!"

He ended: Arthur knew the voice; the
face

Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the name
Went wandering somewhere darkling in his
mind.

And Arthur deign'd not use of word or
sword,

But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd from
horse

To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,
Down from the causeway heavily to the
swamp

Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching wave
Heard in dead night along that table-shore
Drops flat, and after the great waters break
Whitening for half a league, and thin them-
selves

Far over sands marbled with moon and
cloud,

From less and less to nothing; thus he fell
Head-heavy, while the knights, who watch'd
him, roar'd

And shouted and leapt down upon the fall'n;
There trampled out his face from being
known,

And sank his head in mire, and slimed them-
selves:

Nor heard the King for their own cries, but
sprang

Thro' open doors, and swording right and
left

Men, women, on their sodden faces, hurl'd
The tables over and the wines, and slew
Till all the rafters rang with woman-yells,

And all the pavement stream'd with mas-
sacre:

Then, yell with yell echoing, they fired the
tower

Which half that autumn night, like the live
North,

Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and Alcor,
Made all above it, and a hundred meres
About it, as the water Moab saw

Come round by the East, and out beyond
them flush'd

The long low dune, and lazy-plunging sea.

So all the ways were safe from shore to
shore.
But in the heart of Arthur pain was lord.

Then out of Tristram waking the red
dream

Fled with a shout, and that low lodge re-
turn'd,

Mid-forest, and the wind among the boughs.
He whistled his good warhorse left to graze
Among the forest greens, vaulted upon him,
And rode beneath an ever-showering leaf,

Till one lone woman, weeping near a cross,
Stay'd him, "Why weep ye?" "Lord,"
she said, "my man

Hath left me or is dead"; whereon he
thought—

"What an she hate me now? I would not
this.

What an she love me still? I would not
that.

I know not what I would"—but said to
her,—

"Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate return,
He find thy favor changed and love thee
not"—

Then pressing day by day thro' Lyonesse
Last in a rocky hollow, belling, heard
The hounds of Mark, and felt the goodly
hounds

Yelp at his heart, but, turning, past and
gain'd

Tintagil, half in sea, and high on land,
A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,
A low sea-sunset glorying round her hair
And glossy-throated grace, Isolte the Queen.

And when she heard the feet of Tristram
grind

The spiring stone that scaled about her
tower,

Flush'd, started, met him at the doors, and
there

Belted his body with her white embrace,
Crying aloud, "Not Mark—not Mark, my
soul!

The footstep flutter'd me at first: not he:
Catlike thro' his own castle steals my Mark,
But warrior-wise thou stridest through his
halls

Who hates thee, as I him—ev'n to the
death.

My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark
Quickened within me, and knew that thou wert
nigh."

To whom Sir Tristram smiling, "I am here.
Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine."

And drawing somewhat backward she re-
plied,

"Can he be wrong'd who is not ev'n his
own,

But save for dread of thee had beaten me,
Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me some-
how—Mark?

What rights are his that dare not strike for
them?

Not lift a hand—not, tho' he found me
thus!

But hearken, have ye met him? hence he
went

To-day for three days' hunting—as he

And so returns belike within an hour.

Mark's way, my soul!—but eat not thou

Because he hates thee even more than fears;

Nor drink: and when thou passest any wood

Close visor, lest an arrow from the bush

Should leave me all alone with Mark and

My God, the measure of my hate for Mark

Is as the measure of my love for thee."

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one by

Drain'd of her force, again she sat, and

To Tristram, as he knelt before her, saying,

"O hunter, and O blower of the horn,

Harper, and thou hast been a rover too,

For ere I mated with my shambling king,

Ye twain had fallen out about the bride

Of one—his name is out of me—the prize,

If prize she were—(what marvel—she could

Thine, friend: and ever since my craven

To wreck thee villainously: but, O Sir

What dame or damsel have ye kneeled to

And Tristram, "Last to my Queen Para-

Here now to my Queen Paramount of love,

And loveliness, ay, lovelier than when first

Her light feet fell on our rough Lyonesse,

Sailing from Ireland."

Softly laugh'd Isolt,

"Flatter me not, for hath not our great

My dote of beauty trebled?" and he said,

"Her beauty is her beauty, and thine thine,

And thine is more to me—soft, gracious,

Save when thy Mark is kindled on thy lips

Most gracious; but she, haughty, ev'n to

Lancelot: for I have seen him wan enow

To make one doubt if ever the great Queen

Have yielded him her love."

To whom Isolt,

"Ah then, false hunter and false harper, thou

Who breakest thro' the scruple of my bond,

Calling me thy white hind, and saying to me

That Guinevere had sinned against the

And I—misynoked with such a want of

That I could hardly sin against the lowest."

He answer'd, "O my soul, be comforted!

If this be sweet, to sin in leading-strings,

If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,

Crown'd warrant had we for the crowning

That made us happy: but how ye greet me

—fear

And fault and doubt—no word of that fond

Tale—

Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet memo-

Of Tristram in that year he was away."

And, saddening on the sudden, spake

"I had forgotten all in my strong joy

To see thee—yearnings?—ay! for, hour

Here in the never-ended afternoon,

O sweeter than all memories of thee,

Deeper than any yearnings after thee

Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-smiling

Watched from this tower. Isolt of Britain

Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,

Would that have chill'd her bride-kiss?

Wedded her?

Fought in her father's battles? wounded

The King was all fulfill'd with gratefulness,

And she, my namesake of the hands, that

Thy hurt and heart with unguent and

Well—can I wish her any huger wrong

'Than having known thee? her too hast thou

To pine and waste in those sweet memories?

O were I not my Mark's, by whom all men

Are noble, I should hate thee more than

And Tristram, fondling her light hands,

"Grace, Queen, for being loved: she loved

Did I love her? the name at least I loved.

Isolt?—I fought his battles, for Isolt!

The night was dark; the true star set.

Isolt!

The name was ruler of the dark—Isolt?

Care not for her! patient, and prayerful,

Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to God."

And Isolt answer'd, "Yea, and why not I?

Mine is the larger need, who am not meek,

Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell thee

Here one black, mute midsummer night I

Lonely, but musing on thee, wondering

Murmuring a light song I had heard thee

And once or twice I spake thy name aloud.

Then flash'd a levin-brand; and near me

In fuming sulphur blue and green, a fiend—

Mark's way to steal behind one in the dark—

For there was Mark: 'He has wedded her,'
he said,
Not said, but hiss'd it; then this crown of
towers
So shook to such a roar of all the sky,
That here in utter dark I swoon'd away,
And woke again in utter dark, and cried,
'I will flee hence and give myself to God'—
And thou wert lying in thy new leman's
arms."

Then Tristram, ever dallying with her
hand,
"May God be with thee, sweet, when old
and gray,
And past desire!" a saying that anger'd
her.

"May God be with thee, sweet, when thou
art old,
And sweet no more to me!" I need Him
now.

For when had Lancelot utter'd aught so gross
Ev'n to the swineherd's malkin in the mast?
The greater man, the greater courtesy.
But thou, thro' ever harrying thy wild
beasts—

Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a lance
Becomes thee well—art grown wild beast
thyself.

How darest thou, if lover, push me even
In fancy from thy side, and set me far
In the gray distance, half a life away,
Her to be loved no more? Unsay it, un-
swear!

Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,
Broken with Mark and hate and solitude,
Thy marriage and mine own, that I should
suck

Lies like sweet wines: lie to me: I believe.
Will ye not lie? not swear, as there ye
kneel,

And solemnly as when ye swear to him,
The man of men, our King—My God, the
power

Was once in vows when men believed the
King!

They lied not then, who swore, and thro'
their vows

The King prevailing made his realm:—I
say,

Swear to me thou wilt love me ev'n when
old,

Gray-haired, and past desire, and in de-
spair."

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up and
down,

"Vows! did ye keep the vow ye made to
Mark

More than I mine? Lied, say ye? Nay,
but learnt,

The vow that binds too strictly snaps it-
self—

My knighthood taught me this—ay, being
snapt—

We run more counter to the soul thereof
Than had we never sworn. I swear no
more.

I swore to the great King, and am forsworn.
For once—ev'n to the height—I honor'd
him.

'Man, is he man at all?' methought, when
first

I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and be-
held

That victor of the Pagan throned in hall—
His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a brow—

Like billow high in heaven, the steel-blue
eyes,

The golden beard that clothed his lips with
light—

Moreover, that weird legend of his birth,
With Merlin's mystic babble about his end,
Amazed me; then, his foot was on a stool
Shaped as a dragon; he seem'd to me no
man,

But Michael trampling Satan; so I swear,
Being amazed; but this went by—the vows!
O ay—the wholesome madness of an hour—
They served their use, their time; for every
knight

Believed himself a greater than himself,
And every follower eyed him as a God:
Till he, being lifted up beyond himself,
Did mightier deeds than elsewhere he had
done,

And so the realm was made; but then their
vows—

First mainly thro' that sullying of our
Queen—

Began to gall the knighthood, asking
whence

Had Arthur right to bind them to himself?
Dropt down from heaven? wash'd up from
out the deep?

They fail'd to trace him thro' the flesh and
blood

Of our old Kings: whence then? a doubtful
lord

To bind them by inviolable vows,
Which flesh and blood perforce would vio-
late:

For feel this arm of mine—the tide within
Red with free chase and heather-scented air,
Pulsing full man; can Arthur make me pure
As any maiden child? lock up my tongue

From uttering freely what I freely hear?
Bind me to one? The great world laughs
at it.

And worldling of the world am I, and know
The ptarmigan that whitens ere his hour
Wooes his own end; we are not angels here
Nor shall be: vows—I am woodman of the
woods,

And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale
Mark them: my soul, we love but while we
may;

And therefore is my love so large for thee,
Seeing it is not bounded save by love."

Here ending, he moved toward her, and
she said,

"Good: an I turn'd away my love for thee
To some one thrice as courteous as thy-
self—

For courtesy wins woman all as well

King, and am forsworn.
 the height — I honor'd
 all? methought, when
 gh Lyonesse, and be-
 gan thrond in hall —
 ay'd from off a brow —
 heaven, the steel-blue
 at clothed his lips with
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 ed save by love."
 oved toward her, and
 away my love for thee
 as courteous as thy-
 man all as well

As valor may — but he that closes both
 Is perfect, he is Lancelot — taller indeed,
 Rosier, and comelier, thou — but say I loved
 This knightliest of all knights, and cast thee
 back
 Thine own small saw 'We love but while we
 may,'
 Well then, what answer?"

He that while she spake,
 Mindful of what he brought to adorn her
 with,
 The jewels, had let one finger lightly touch
 The warm white apple of her throat, replied,
 "Press this a little closer, sweet, until —
 Come, I am hunger'd and half-anger'd —
 meat,
 Wine, wine — and I will love thee to the
 death,
 And out beyond into the dream to come."

So then, when both were brought to full
 accord,
 She rose, and set before him all he will'd;
 And after these had comforted the blood
 With meats and wines, and satiated their
 hearts —
 Now talking of their woodland paradise,
 The deer, the dews, the fern, the founts, the
 lawns;
 Now mocking at the much ungainliness,
 And craven shifts, and long crane legs of
 Mark —
 Then Tristram laughing caught the harp,
 and sang:

"Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that bend the
 brier!
 A star in heaven, a star within the mere!
 Ay, ay, O ay — a star was my desire,
 And one was far apart, and one was near:

Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that bow the
 grass!
 And one was water and one star was fire,
 And one will ever shine and one will pass.
 Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that move the
 mere."

Then in the light's last glimmer Tristram
 show'd
 And swung the ruby carcanet. She cried,
 "The collar of some order, which our King
 Hath newly founded, all for thee, my soul,
 For thee, to yield thee grace beyond thy
 peers."
 "Not so, my Queen," he said, "but the
 red fruit
 Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-heaven,
 And won by Tristram as a tourney-prize,
 And hither brought by Tristram for his last
 Love-offering and peace-offering unto thee."

He rose, he turn'd, and flinging round her
 neck,
 Clasp'd it; but while he bow'd himself to lay
 Warm kisses in the hollow of her throat,
 Out of the dark, just as the lips had touch'd,
 Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek —
 "Mark's way," said Mark, and clove him
 thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and while
 he climb'd,
 All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping gloom,
 The stairway to the hall, and look'd and saw
 The great Queen's bower was dark, — about
 his feet
 A voice clung sobbing till he question'd it,
 "What art thou?" and the voice about his
 feet
 Sent up an answer, sobbing, "I am thy fool,
 And I shall never make thee smile again."

TO THE QUEEN.

EPILOGUE TO THE IDYLS.

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,
 And loyal to thy land, as this to thee —
 Bear witness, that rememberable day,
 When, pale as yet, and fever-worn, the
 Prince
 Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering life
 again
 From half-way down the shadow of the
 grave,
 Past with thee thro' thy people and their
 love,
 And London roll'd one tide of joy thro' all
 Her trebled millions, and loud leuques of
 man
 And welcome! witness, too, the silent cry,

The prayer of many a race and creed, and
 clime —
 Thunderless lightnings striking under sea
 From sunset and sunrise of all thy realm,
 And that true North, whereof we lately
 heard
 A strain to shame us "keep you to your-
 selves":
 So loyal is too costly! friends — your love
 Is but a burden: loose the bond, and go."
 Is this the tone of empire? here the faith
 That made us rulers? this, indeed, her voice
 And meaning, whom the roar of Hougou-
 mont
 Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven?

What shock has fool'd her since, that she
should speak
So feebly? wealthier — wealthier — hour by
hour!

The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,
Some third-rate isle half-lost among her
seas!

There rang her voice, when the full city
peal'd

Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to their
crown

Are loyal to their own far sons, who love
Our ocean-empire with her boundless homes
For ever-broadening England, and her throne
In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,
That knows not her own greatness: if she
knows

And dreads it we are fall'n. — But thou,
my Queen,

Not for itself, but thro' thy living love
For one to whom I made it o'er his grave
Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with
Soul

Rather than that gray king, whose name, a
ghost,

Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from
mountain peak,

And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still: or
him

Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's, one
Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time

That hover'd between war and wantonness,
And crownings and dethronements: take
withal

Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that
Heaven

Will blow the tempest in the distance back
From thine and ours: for some are scared,
who mark,

Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,
Waverings of every vane with every wind,

And wordy trucklings to the transient hour,
And fierce or careless looseners of the faith,

And Softness breeding scorn of simple life,
Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,

Or Labor, with a groan and not a voice,
Or Art, with poisonous honey stol'n from

France,
And that which knows, but careful for itself,
And that which knows not, ruling that

which knows
To its own harm: the goal of this great

world
Lies beyond sight: yet — if our slowly-grown
And crown'd Republic's crowning common-

sense,
That saved her many times, not fail — their

fears
Are morning shadows huger than the shapes
That cast them, not those gloomier which

forego
The darkness of that battle in the West,
Where all of high and holy dies away.

THE END.

war and wantonness,
dethronements: take

and his trust that

in the distance back
for some are scared,

signs of storm,
one with every wind,
to the transient hour,
looseners of the faith,
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